

DEAN FARRAR AS HEADMASTER. By An Old Pupil.

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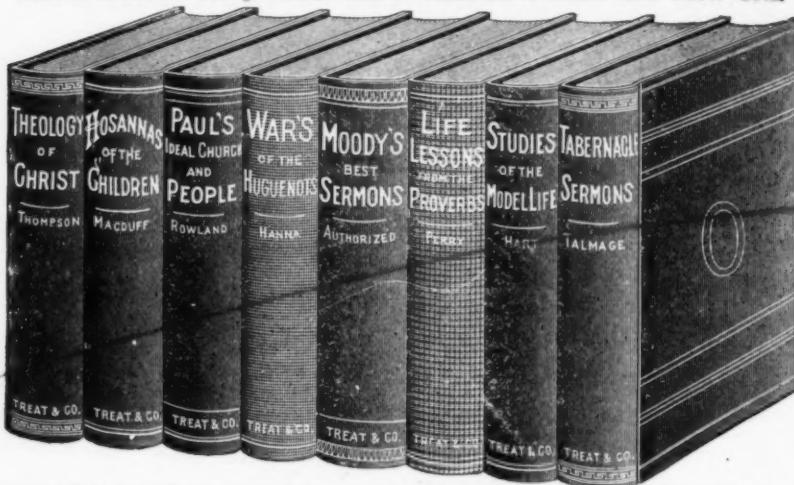
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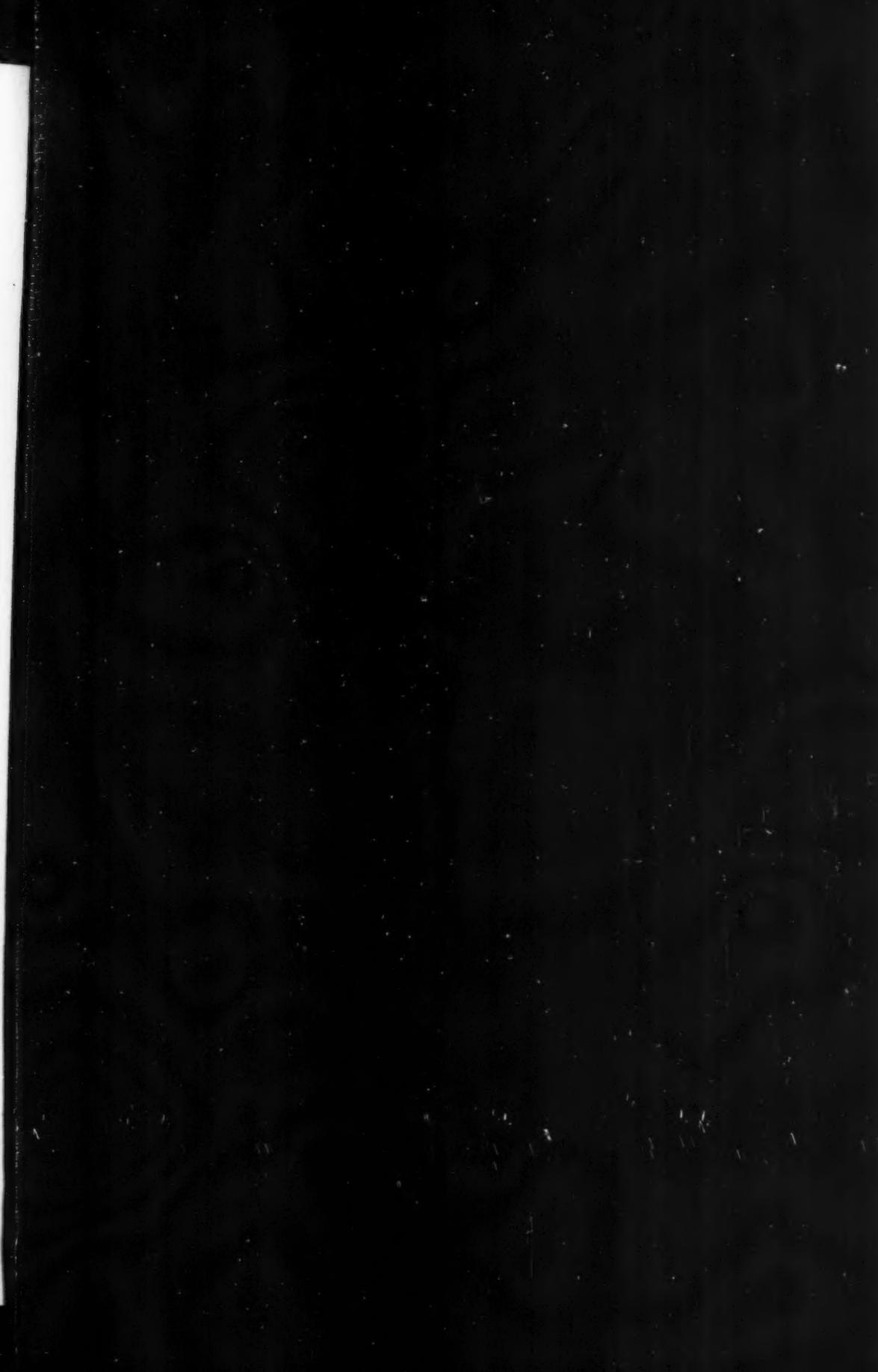
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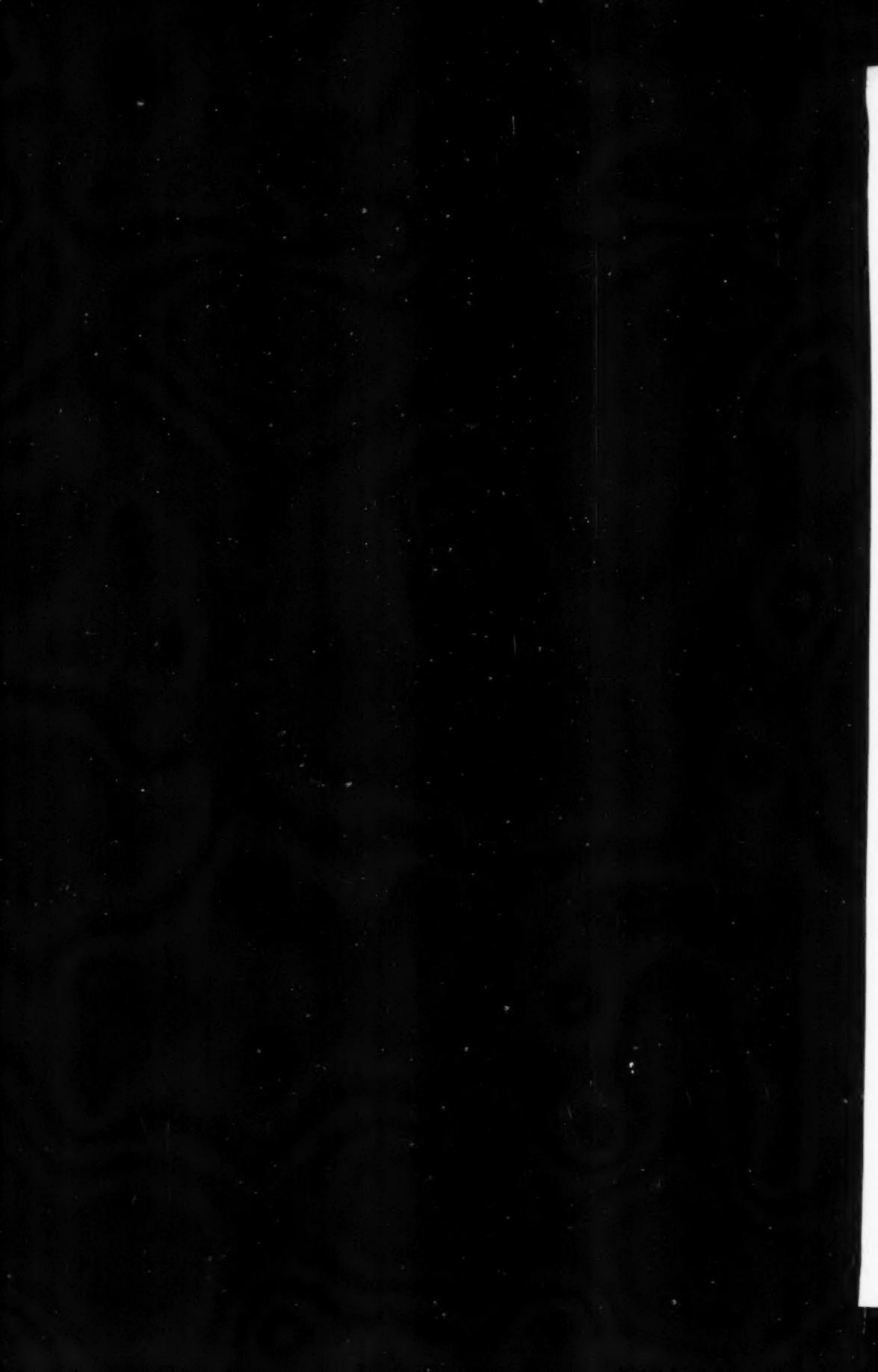
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DEAN FARRAR AS HEADMASTER.

BY HIS OLD PUPIL J. D. R.

In trying to recall my recollections of Dean Farrar as headmaster of Marlborough College, I still see him as I saw him through a schoolboy's colored glasses; and much of what I shall write will doubtless tell the reader more of my defects of vision than of the characteristics of my subject. Even now I can make no pretence to a critical estimate, for his image appears to me through the haze of far-off memories—

And the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

And although I know that schoolboys see but little straight and nothing whole, and that they do not detect the difference between what is important and what is trivial, yet I am unable to write of him otherwise than as an impressionist whose impressions were formed at an immature age. For the rest I will try to observe Othello's precepts,

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate
Nor set down aught in malice.

The first characteristic of Farrar—old habit makes me drop the Dean—which struck the average schoolboy was his grandeur of manner. I have been told that those who first met F. D. Maurice face to face were similarly

struck. My credulous school friend, Ernest Greenhorn, when he passed from the fifth to the sixth form in the Marlborough of thirty years ago, thought at first blush that he had passed from a region where masters were mortals to a region over which some demi-god presided. After a few lessons even he found out his mistake, suffered a reaction, and became incredulous and iconoclastic. Months elapsed before he could again appreciate the advantages as well as the disadvantages which the grand manner entails, when it is applied to every-day school life: how it enhances exalted ideals, how it lends itself to humor, and how unjustly it stereotypes and exaggerates—like some phonograph and megaphone combined—every foible and folly of its owner. Spell, disenchantment, and a curious blend of both succeeded one another in regular order.

But perhaps I ought to state more clearly what I mean by his grandeur of manner. Aristotle's description of the external marks of the grand man suited Farrar exactly. "His gait is slow, his voice deep, and he speaks (like heroic verse) in measured cadence." And this grand manner clung to him inalienably, came from or passed into his very soul, I hardly know which. At all events it revealed the man's inmost literary bent. What was

most genuine in his literary tastes impelled him towards grandeur. Bias towards the big was an instinct with him. Nothing was more inevitable than that he should prefer Milton before all other poets and Milton before all other prose-writers. Probably he is the only nineteenth century man of letters of whom it could be said that his character was steeped and saturated in Milton. Admirations for Milton in the sense in which Farrar admired Milton exists no longer if it ever existed. Some attraction or affinity drove him towards whatever looked large and splendid, away from what looked little and sordid. That was why he preferred the desolate unearthly glory of Milton to the glorious humanity of Shakespeare. Indeed, I think that he liked Milton the more, because Milton is remote from humanity, shrinks from contact with its coarser manifestations, and lets us too easily forget the facts of actual life. Probably, after Milton, Aeschylus came next in his heart of hearts: and his sympathy was intense with that conception of the awfulness of fate which pervades the great epic and dramatic writings of every age. His sympathy was intense and it was also discerning; and he used to illustrate it with unerring felicity by such and such an adjective in the suitors' scene of the *Odyssey*, such and such a turn in the plot of *Macbeth*, such and such sentences in Sophocles, or even by a well-known passage from Shelley, and a little known passage from Froude. When the Erinnies darkened the air, Farrar was in his element. Now Farrar was essentially a worshipper of poets and the like; and I thought then, and still think, that these literary tastes formed the inmost fibre of the man, and therefore of the schoolmaster. Even his books cannot wholly disguise his devotion to real grandeur of style and matter. And this semblance of grandeur cast on

everything which he said and did sometimes some shadow of itself, sometimes more shadow of its opposite, but more usually an intermixture of serious and farcical which used to strike us as so whimsical that we could not laugh at it, we could only quote it.

But his books bred scoffers; one of whom will doubtless already arise in his wrath and ask, when and where was he grand? or humorous? or even something betwixt and between?

Let us forget his books awhile! They were meant for others and have had their reward. We shall have enough to do in fixing our attention on that part of his life which he dedicated to us. So to resume.

I can certainly remember one occasion on which he conveyed to me a sense of pure unadulterated grandeur. It was one Sunday evening when he read in chapel the chapter in Job about the horse, with a classic repose and a rich resonance of voice the like of which I have never heard since. His voice was not suited to declamation, or emotion, or variety of intonation; but if only the speaker could keep quite calm and speak or read something which really suited it, it was matchless. And Job and Isaiah suited it. His reading of Job and Isaiah has produced on me the effect of some great but severe piece of music which bears being played monotonously—say some fugue of Bach—performed on a perfect instrument. Yet it is odd to associate music with Farrar. For no one except Dean Stanley knew less of music than Farrar, as this thirty-year-old story will testify. Dr. F.: "I am told that when I preach to-morrow I shall have to preach on the note of the building and that the note of the building is E flat. What is E flat?" *Studiosus Musica:* "The organist will play a short interlude ending on E flat." Dr. F.: "Yes, I know that: but how am I to transfer the note E flat from

the organ to my voice?" and the *Studiorum Musicae* was puzzled. Moreover Farrar's description in a foolish poem written very long ago of an awful boy named Ronald singing on a lake

With exquisite falsetto now and then does not show a keen sense of music. Yet, unlike Dean Stanley, he admired music. And, as I have said, under certain conditions and for certain purposes, his voice could produce unrivalled legato effects with the ease and certainty of some old Italian violoncello. Now his voice was always with him; and is it to be supposed that this was the only occasion on which it did justice to itself? that Milton, Aeschylus, and those passages from Shakespeare, Sophocles, and the *Odyssey* which appealed most to him did not also elicit the same nobility of tone? Over and over again while teaching us he spoke and read big things well and without effort; and whenever he did so, he did so unaffectedly and majestically. The best, perhaps the only, philosophic scrap which I picked up from his table was a lucid exposition of Coleridge's distinction between the imagination and fancy. But I am much more grateful to him for the way in which he made me feel in my marrow and my bones some far-off inkling of the imaginative power which possessed Milton and Aeschylus, and inspired one side of Homer's, Sophocles', and Shakespeare's genius.

And now for the humor. Farrar's industry was positively tireless, and the more so because he did nothing by deputy. He was like perpetual motion or radium. The man who was form-master, and transacted all the business of headmaster of a great public school, preached hundreds of sermons, and crammed his "Life of Christ" with references to scholars, pedants, poets and saints during those five brief years,

1871 to 1876, lived a crowded life. And he seemed to have thought or hoped that his pupils would prove equally energetic. So one afternoon he took some friends on a surprise visit to some sixth form studies in "A" house, thinking or hoping to find its occupants —like Charity Pecksniff—at work. *O sancta Simplicitas!* The industrious apprentices were caught red-handed in the very act of enjoying "a brew." Or ought I not to write brown-handed? For in those days a brew consisted of cocoa and roast potatoes. At the next lesson Farrar began to narrate the story of his disillusion in low, mourning voice thus:

I confidently expected to be able to point with pride to my sixth form boys absorbed and immersed in study of some Attic masterpiece,

"Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine."

Then, gradually raising his voice, he continued:

But what was my indignation, vexation, and shame when I discovered them greedily engaged in ravenously devouring the semese fragments of a barbaric repast,

and those last six words, uttered fortissimo with intense vigor, launched him on a speech whose sesquipedalian grandiloquence Dr. Middleton might have envied. Indeed, for full five minutes he was like "a bitten dictionary," and at the end of it his good-humor was quite restored. Our first impression was, how odd it was that he should have felt disappointed! Our second, Could he really expect to crush cocoa and roast potatoes with those furious blows of his Nasmyth hammer? Our third, What Gargantuan humor! What fresh, fluent, and spontaneous rhetoric! How purposeless it seemed when levelled against our cocoa and roast potatoes! How effec-

tive it has proved against his dumps! True, it was at first unconscious, then semi-conscious, and only at last (if then) wholly conscious; but this only made the humor more humorous. Such outbursts as these made our school-life lively.

I now pass to the commoner form of story which his pupils used to tell of him. And here I must confess that pupils have the bad habit of telling stories about their headmasters, and that where headmasters possess a striking or puzzling individuality these stories gather round them like clouds around a mountain top. All the characteristic stories about Farrar revealed a lofty strain of enthusiasm just tinged by the ridiculous. The problem set before the narrator was how to excite laughter without extinguishing admiration. If the narrator created admiration only, he or his audience lacked humor. If laughter was the only response, he or his audience was a very cheap and hopeless kind of Philistine indeed. Typical stories about Farrar as a schoolmaster were good tests for sifting witless sentimentalists and people whose narrowness is past redemption. And perhaps the reason of this is that his virtues, like those of Don Quixote, were so unusual and above the ordinary; and his faults, like those of Don Quixote, were so unusually obvious. An instance or two will make my meaning plain.

I have referred to his all-devouring industry. That in itself was stimulating and inspiring. Moreover, he had a fine memory and a sense of the picturesque which fed largely on literary histories, and which invested our studies of Guizot, Duruy, Sismondi, and Michelet with an unique charm and fascination. Yet how incredible the advice sounded which he used to impart to all and sundry, students and athletes, dull and clever, when he said good-bye to them for the holidays: "My

dear boy, if you will take down from your shelves and read during the holidays some good book like Gibbon's 'Rome,' Milman's 'Latin Christianity,' Grote's 'Greece,' or Mommsen's 'Rome,' it will be so much clear gain." I can still remember the innocent assurance with which he hurled forty-one volumes at our devoted heads, and his curious emphasis on the last four monosyllables still rings in my ears. Again his legend beneath our exercises, "Lege! lege! aliquid hærebit," was a little too like the old proverb, "Throw enough mud and some will stick." Of course, the Philistine, who is always a sensible person, will at once observe, "How insane to preach quantity instead of quality, width without depth." And, being always prompt and decisive, he will at once write off Farrar's powers as a teacher, in the same way as a trader writes off a bad debt. And yet, Mr. Philistine, I can assure you that this advice, paradoxical though it looked, produced fruit in the most unlikely places: we could not help remembering it, if for no other reason, for the reason that it seemed absurd; and, like you, we said, "There is not much light in it," and we smiled; then we thought over it again, and said, "There is, after all, some true fire in it," and we went away and worked. It is possible that our headmaster sent toddlers on the tramp before they could walk: but not all the sensible, prompt, and decisive persons in the world will ever persuade me that zeal has not something to do with knowledge. And, assuredly, Farrar was a whole-hearted, infectious, proselytizing zealot.

Perhaps Farrar's influence—as a zealot for *belles lettres*—was increased by the sense we always had that he formed part of that literary world to which he was so passionately devoted. We did not derive that sense from the oddity with which he invariably re-

ferred to Ruskin, Stanley, Browning, Tennyson, M. Arnold and others as his "eminent friends"—an oddity to which it would require Dickens's pen to do justice—far less from his literary ventures: but partly from the fact that it was true that they were his friends, and partly from the fact that when at his best and simplest he was himself a distinguished man and seemed, as I have said, at home with big things; and partly from the quiet way in which he would now and then repeat some familiar talk with one of that glorious company, say, with Browning or Tennyson; thus he would tell us how Browning told him how the famous ride from Ghent to Aix had set pedants diving into old books, but that it really took place in the nineteenth century in a yacht on the Mediterranean; and I remember the following conversation early in 1875: Dr. F.: "I have just been staying with Tennyson, who read me his new poem. It is a completely new departure." Precocious Boy: "Then it is a drama." Dr. F., with withering contempt: "My dear boy! do you really think that I am a little child with whom you can play at guessing?" And the P. B. was baffled. A few months later "Queen Mary" was published. Farrar's nearness to these kings of dreamland invested them and the dreams which were their subjects with a reality which helped us to understand literature.

What may be called Farrar's enthusiasm of humanity only began to push itself into prominence during the end of his "lustre" at Marlborough. He was then preparing for his crusade in favor of teetotalism, and what he called "Ephphatha, or the Amelioration of the world," and the following scene took place at a dinner at Jowett's soon after he went to St. Margaret's, Westminster. Towards dessert Farrar took up his parable against Dives; in fact, ran amok, morally speaking; or perad-

venture he was rehearsing. His voice rose higher and higher until (like Protagoras) he spread silence around him, and he was heard thundering out: "What I complain of as a clergyman is that I have to do what no layman has to do; (!) I have to beg and beg in vain. Fashionable ladies come to my church glittering with precious gems; and yet they will not sacrifice one diamond from their proud tiaras in order to save some erring sister from destruction." When he finished, the silence grew sultry. All the hearers looked gloomily at their plates. One said to himself: what shall I throw on the bonfire of vanities? my sherry? Another thought: saving souls with a diamond? that sounds crude, if not burglarious. Then Jowett, who had been looking as though he meant mischief, squeaked out: "What I object to as a clergyman is that I have to exaggerate so." There arose among the audience a sound which was almost like a titter, almost like the sound of cold water squirted on to hot iron. Then Jowett, correcting his apparent rudeness, quickly added, "I mean that I have to represent the charity for which I am preaching as more important than any other charity; and I do it very badly because I never succeed." It was thus that Jowett paraphrased Farrar and dispelled the thunder-cloud. But I am wandering. Many of Farrar's pupils have engaged in philanthropic work, yet I doubt whether this side of Farrar's character affected them. He was not at ease in Zion; a Miltonic discontent seethed within him; his aspirations were unselfish; but philanthropy in order to be effectual needs far more than this: it needs, among other things, close attention and the courage to lead a dull life. Therefore, his influence in stimulating philanthropy was at this period indirect or non-existent; but his influence in clothing the great names and phantoms of

literature with life, in driving us to wonder and explore far and wide, and in instilling into us, we hardly knew when or how, an idea of the unity and greatness of the great literature of the world, was definite, persistent and ineffaceable.

Perhaps our ability to appreciate Farrar was impaired by the fact that he succeeded Bradley.

Bradley was a schoolmaster to the finger-tips, with clear, exact mind; an excellent teacher of scholarship (in the old sense); doing small things perfectly; very thorough; quick and merciless in searching out weak spots; diligent in the use of probe and microscope; armed at all points, and without a single weak spot himself; invulnerable, firm, business-like, and knowing every boy.

Farrar was the antithesis of all this. He was not only something more, but he was also something less than a schoolmaster. True! as a mere teacher of scholarship in the old sense he was quite up to the highest school standard. His translations lacked elasticity but were never hollow like his books; and when they were high-flown, they attained real exaltation, as in the following translation of Plato.

Gazing at stars, my star? Oh! would that *I* were the welkin,
Starry with infinite eyes, gazing for ever on thee.

As a critic of style he was free from most of the vices which are popularly supposed to infect his style, but he certainly laid undue stress, not on flowers, but on figures of speech. He encouraged "extensive" rather than "intensive culture." He habitually looked at objects, even at near objects, with a telescope held to his intellectual eye. And he was pained when he found faults. As a disciplinarian he was unconventional, to say the least. He did not take a drill-sergeant's view of his

profession. He gave us great liberty, rode with a very loose rein, and trusted to our moral force instead of to his own vigilance. Moreover, he proclaimed all his own weak points from the housetop; thus his rooted belief that he knew boys whom he did not know led him into many blunders, for which, however, his evidently kindly meaning easily atoned; and the too great ease with which he took offence, and then forgave, looked like want of judgment, but was partly due to the unsuspecting sincerity which made him utter everything that was passing through his mind. He made up for want of firmness by excess of kindness. Indeed, as a form-master he would have been defenceless against his pupils if his pupils had been against him. But lest I prove too liberal in confessing another man's sins, I will interrupt this catalogue by three anecdotes which are very trivial, but two of them will shock the conventional critic beyond recovery, and will at the same time illustrate how this system, or absence of system, worked.

My first anecdote is mere frivolity, and proves nothing except perhaps the danger of making a slip if you are too solemn. When Farrar intentionally repeated something that he had told us before he was apt to let his mind wander elsewhere, and to trust his tongue implicitly. I have once or twice heard that unruly member play its absent master a dirty trick while telling a certain pretty story from Xenophon. It was thus that the tongue told it: "You remember how when the Greek soldiers came in sight of Thalatta they called out with one accord Trapezous! Trapezous!" Now Trapezous means Trebizond, and Thalatta means the sea; and what the traitor within his mouth had done was to transpose these words with a ludicrous effect, which Farrar's solemnity heightened, and his sensitiveness forbade us

to laugh at to his face. We all make tongue-slips, and, after all, this tongue-slip had the accidental advantage of nailling in our memories a story that told us a great deal about Greeks and about masses of men, and nothing about Farrar or ourselves. Such tongue-slips occurred very seldom.

This is my second anecdote. I do not know whether it was from over-work or why it was, but every now and then Farrar had an unfortunate habit of mechanically repeating himself. During one term, when this habit was at its worst, we used to have weekly lessons in the Septuagint, in every other verse of which the Greek words for "word" and "work" are interchanged. Regularly every Monday morning he used to explain this confusion in these words: "The reason why 'ergon' is used here instead of 'logos' is that it is a translation of the Hebrew word Dabar, which means Both Word And Thing." Those four last monosyllables used to boom forth like Big Ben striking four or like the sound of two great Amens. One Monday morning Thersites, who sat next me, whispered in my ear: "We have not had Dabar yet. Shall I get it?" I replied, "Do if you dare." And he unblushingly asked why "ergon" was used instead of "logos" in the passage which had just been translated. "Ah!" said our revered master, "you could not be expected to know that; but the reason, etc." It came out verbatim. He walked with stately tread straight into the open trap. Thersites remained "looking wistfully with wide blue eyes as in a picture." The rest of us nearly choked with laughter. Yet we would not have let him see us laugh for worlds. All boys are brutes; but no boy was cruel enough to wilfully hurt that sensitive stricken soul. So when the lesson was over, Ulysses persuaded Thersites, but without Homeric means, not to repeat that jest; and it was

never repeated. The provocation also ceased, but I do not know why.

My third anecdote will stagger even those who have followed me thus far; but no one else could have been the subject of it but Farrar. So it shall be told. At a certain history lesson, after the whole form had failed to answer some trifling question, Farrar fairly flung the reins down and broke into the following oration: "My dear boys! I am profoundly discouraged! For fifteen years of my life I have been letting down a bucket into an empty well and drawing it up again! For fifteen years of my life I have been pouring out water upon the arid sand!" Then he gathered up his books and fled. I revive this memory in no unkind spirit towards Farrar—perhaps, poor man, he felt ill—but to show how it affected us. Well! we all saw the mad folly of it; yet we all regretted the unmistakable anguish which we had innocently caused. A few laughed outright. A few cried Shame! Shame! on those who laughed. One boy, and only one boy, did the right thing; and if this should meet his eye I hereby, after much delay, tender him my thanks. He went to Farrar and showed him that he (Farrar) had acted unreasonably. Afterwards Farrar admitted to us that he had been hasty, and had made a mountain out of a molehill. Thus the incident closed. It, too, was not repeated.

These occasions show Farrar at his worst as a schoolmaster; and on the last occasion he was almost as bad as his schoolbooks. Yet on each occasion all ended well, and surely all is well that ends well. Farrar's stateliness invariably brought his blunders into unfair relief; his unfailing earnestness, candor, and kindness invariably corrected the effects which his blunders might have otherwise produced. We regarded his great qualities with admiration and his failings with tenderness.

I remember the shock which the contrast between Bradley and Farrar produced on veteran pupils of Bradley. One of them, indeed, who was neither a scoffer nor a Philistine, wrote to his late headmaster on a postcard in the days when postcards were the last new thing:

Dear Dr. Bradley.
We miss you sadly;
And wish Dr. Farrar
Would go back to Harra'.

Other veterans carped worse even than this bad boy cackled; and predicted a plentiful crop of milk-sops, pedants, prigs, and sciolists on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of untamed rebels marching under the banner of *inculta rusticitas*. But I have no patience with those who expect any class of people to conform to a given type. One good custom can corrupt the world: and an able man who means well and is true to himself can break the best rules. Besides, facts are on the side of Farrar's efficiency as a headmaster. It was just after the great fever. Parents wrote by every post withdrawing their sons' names from the doomed school. The bursar's books were all but a blank. The school was threatened with extinction. Then Farrar came, and the tide turned. He raised the school out of the slough of despond. During the five years that followed the fortunes of the school were restored, and boys who were immediately under him won as high and as many honors as those won in Bradley's five best years, though the credit for that feat was doubtless partly due to other masters, or possibly even to the boys themselves. Indeed, it is impossible to see who could have done better for Marlborough than Farrar. He was the very man for that post at that time. The moment required a headmaster with a reputation and a personality, with unsparing en-

ergy and unflagging enthusiasm: and Farrar fulfilled these requirements.

But after all even his books succeeded; so I will return once more from the man's successes to the man. He was as unlike in nature to the typical schoolboy as it was possible to be. None could have ever called him "jolly" or "old fellow." He was not adamantine and Rhadamanthine like Temple. He was not sunny, sensible, and wide-awake like Bradley. He was *sui generis*. At first sight he seemed all stateliness and austerity; cold, splendid, one-sided, unattainable: resembling what he used to call "that burnt-out old cinder, the moon." The last sight of him revealed only an excess of sincerity, sensitiveness, candor, and kindness. Would that Aristotle or someone else had invented some word for this particular excess! He was transparency itself. The first quality set off and ennobled the very rare and high enthusiasm which was his most valuable teaching asset; it also accounted for some of his faults and accentuated all his faults as a schoolmaster. The last quality—the glass-house in which he lived—accounted for his other faults and saved him from the effects of all his faults as a schoolmaster. So singular a character was likely to be misunderstood by geese and carps who are guided by superficial impressions; nor was it likely to show much knowledge of the characters of others; but it appealed irresistibly either to the imagination or to sympathy, and that did almost if not quite as well. I have known some half-dozen other headmasters, and have often discussed all of them with their pupils—for I fear that I was ever a gossip—but I adhere to my belief that Farrar was the most interesting of the lot.

So at least this fine man's virtues and frailties appeared to me a generation ago, when I was a dreamy, short-

sighted, half-baked schoolboy, with but little knowledge of character and but little sense of proportion; and, as I now diffidently raise the curtain on some few almost forgotten scenes of private experiences in a public school, I only hope that in doing so I have offended no one, either by my incapaci-

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ity or my mistakes, either by my stinted praise or mild criticism, because, as Dante said of his old schoolmaster:

Chè in la mente m' è fitta ed or m'
accuora
La cara e buona imagine paterna
Di voi quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
M' insegnavate come l' uom s' eterna.

A SMALL EVENT.

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work—God's puppets, best and
worst.

Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event"! Why
"small"?

Costs it more pain than this, ye call
A "great event" should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the
mass

Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

—*Pippa Passes.*

Every night the "Alfresco Entertainers" gave their performance on a little platform set right under the shadow of the great cliff; while in front of them, not a dozen yards away, the rhythmic wash of the sea on a rocky shore seemed a sort of accompaniment to their songs, much softer and more tuneful than that of the poor, jingly, rheumatic piano, which had nothing between it and every sort of weather save an ancient mackintosh cover.

The village itself was but a shelf of shore with one long, straggling, lopsided street: cottage and shop and great hotel set down haphazard, cheek by jowl, all apparently somewhat inept excrescences on the side of the green-clad cliffs rising behind them straight and steep, a sheer five hundred feet,

and just across the narrow line of red road lay the Bristol Channel, with, on a clear day, the Welsh coast plain in view.

At ten years old, people are generally found more interesting than scenery, and Basil took a great interest in the variety entertainers. The men looked so smart and debonnaire, he thought, in their blue reefers, white duck-trousers, and gold-laced yachting caps—though they none of them ever put out to sea. There were five of them altogether, two ladies and three men. Basil did not care so much about the ladies, in spite of the rows of Chinese lanterns that outlined the little stage and shone so pink in the darkness; there seemed no glamor or mystery about them. They were not transcendently beautiful like the gauzy good fairy of pantomime, or the peerless, fearless circus lady in pink and spangles: neither did they possess the mirth-provoking qualities of the dauntless three clad in yachting garb. One always sang sentimentally of "daddies," or "aunties," or "chords" that had somehow gone amiss; and the other—Basil almost disliked that other—sang about things he could in no wise understand in a hoarse voice, and danced in between the verses, and she didn't dance at all prettily, for she had thick ankles and high shoulders.

But the three "naval gentlemen," as Basil respectfully called them, sang funny songs, and acted and knocked each other about in such fashion as caused him almost to roll off his chair in fits of ecstatic mirth. Nearly every fine night after dinner, if nobody wanted him, Harnet, the tall manservant, would take Basil, and they sat on two chairs in the front row and listened to the entertainment. Sometimes grandfather himself would come, but he generally went to sleep in his chair at home; for when a man goes peel-fishing all day, walking half-a-dozen miles up the rocky bed of a Devonshire trout stream to his favorite pool, he is disinclined to move again, once he has changed and dined.

The bulk of the audience attending the "Alfresco Entertainment" sat on the wall separating shore from road, or on the kerbstone, but there were always a few chairs placed directly facing the stage, which were charged for at sixpence each. Harnet was far too grand and dignified to sit on either wall or kerbstone, and as grandfather always gave Basil a shilling to put in the cardboard plate, Harnet preferred to expend it in this wise.

Now, all that company had high-sounding, aristocratic names, except one, who was called, as Basil said, "just simply Mr. Smith." There was Mr. Montmorency, the manager, whose cheeks were almost as blue as his reefer, and his wife, the lady who danced in the evening, but in the day-time affected flowing tea-gowny garments and large flat hats; there was Mr. Neville Beauchamp, who sang coster songs, to whom the particular accent required for this sort of ditty really seemed no effort, as all his songs were given in similar pronounced and singular fashion. The lady of the melancholy ballads was called De Vere; she looked thin and young, and generally cold, as well she might, for she

played everyone's accompaniments, and never wore a coat, however cold the night. But it was for Mr. Smith that Basil felt most enthusiasm. In the first place, his speaking voice was as the voices of "grandfather's friends." In the second, he was, to Basil's thinking, an admirable actor—changing face and voice, even his very body, to suit the part he happened to be playing; and thirdly, he was funny—funny in a way that Basil understood. Even grandfather laughed at Mr. Smith and applauded him, and when the cardboard plate went round, he sent Basil with the first bit of gold they had had that season.

"Clever chap that," he said as they strolled homewards under the quiet stars; "reminds me of someone somehow—looks like a broken-down gentleman; got nice voice, and nice hands—wonder what he's doing with that lot?"

Basil, however, was quite content to admire Mr. Smith without concerning himself as to his antecedents. He forthwith christened him "the Jokey man," and it rather puzzled him that, except at night, the jokey man was hardly ever with the others, but went wandering about by himself in an aimless and somewhat dismal fashion. Could it be that Mr. Montmorency and Mr. Neville Beauchamp were proud, Basil wondered, because they had such fine names?

Basil's face was as round as a full moon, and fresh and fair as a monthly rose. Tall and well set up, he was good at games, and keen on every kind of sport. Long days did he spend up the river with his grandfather fishing for trout—he was to have a licence for peel next summer, but had to be content with trout during this. He went sea-fishing, too, in charge of a nice fisherman called Oxenham, and caught big pollock outside the bay, and every morning Oxenham rowed Basil and

Harnet out from the shore that they might have their morning swim, for the coast is so rocky and dangerous that bathing from the land is no fun at all—though the rocks are very nice to potter about on at low tide, when energetic persons can find prawns in the pools.

One day as Basil was busily engaged in this pursuit, who should come up behind him but the jokey man, looking as melancholy as though there were no sunshine, or blue water, or pleasant pools full of strange sea beasts. Indeed, although he was by profession such an amusing man, he had by no means a cheerful face. Tired lines were written all round his eyes, his shoulders were bent, and his long slim hands hung loose and listless at his sides, yet it was plain he was by no means old. Moreover, he had changed his smart yachting suit for an old tweed coat and knickerbockers, and a grey billycock dragged over his eyes bereft his appearance of all traces of the jokey man. So that for a minute or two Basil did not know him, even although he sat down on a rock close by and lit his pipe.

Basil was standing bare-legged and knee-deep in water in pursuit of a particularly active and artful shrimp, so that it was only when he at last lifted his head with an emphatic "bother," that he noticed the stranger; then he beamed, for chance had tossed plump into his lap the opportunity he had long been seeking.

"How do you do?" the little boy inquired politely, taking off his muffin cap with one wet hand while he grasped his net with the other. "I am so pleased to have met you; I've wanted to for ever so long."

"That's very nice of you," said the man, and when he smiled he looked quite young. "I am sure the pleasure is mutual."

"I've something most pertickler to

ask you," continued Basil eagerly, scrambling out of the pool to sit on the rock beside him, "and it seemed as if I was never to get a chance. It's not for myself either, it's for Viola—you know Viola by sight, I dare say?"

Now, it happened that the jokey man, like most other people in that village, knew Viola by sight very well indeed. In fact, Viola, and the General, and Basil, were as speedily pointed out to every stranger who arrived as though they had been bits of the scenery. For they came every summer, and the village was proud of them.

"Is she your sister?" asked the jokey man, suddenly taking his pipe out of his mouth.

"Yes, and she's two years older than me, but *she* doesn't go to school—I've been for a year—she has a ma'mselle. I dare say you've seen us with her. It's been such a bore having her here, but *she*'s going to-morrow, and then we shall do just what we like, for there will be only Harnet and Polly, and we like them. Grannie had to go off quite suddenly to nurse Aunt Alice, and won't be back for a week, so there'll be nobody but grandfather and us; it'll be simply ripping," and Basil paused breathless, beaming at the pleasant picture he had conjured up.

The jokey man put his pipe back into his mouth and waited, but it had gone out, so he just laid it on the rocks beside him, saying, "What was it you wanted to ask me?"

"It's rather difficult to explain," Basil began, turning very red and rumpling his hair. "It's Viola, you know; she wants so dreadfully to come to your entertainment; I've told her about it, you know, but grandfather says—" here Basil paused, and turned even redder than before; "one has to be so particular over one's girls, you know," he interpolated apologetically, "and she's the only girl in our family.

Grandfather never had any sisters or any daughters, so he thinks no end of Viola, and father and mother are in India, and he says—”

“That some of the songs are vulgar,” said the jokey man shortly; “so they are, he’s perfectly right.”

The jokey man looked at Basil, and Basil looked at the jokey man for a full minute. Then the little boy said very earnestly, “Do you think that you could persuade them—those other gentlemen I mean—to leave out one or two songs one evening? There’s that one about the ‘giddy little girl in the big black hat’ that Mr. Montmorency sings; grandfather doesn’t like that one, and it’s not very amusing, is it? And Viola *does* want to come so dreadfully.”

The jokey man made no reply, but stared straight out to sea with a very grave face. Perhaps he was thinking of all those other Violas who listened night after night to the songs the General objected to, and were perhaps, unlike his Viola, not “cared about, kept out of harm, and schemed for, safe in love as with a charm.”

Basil waited politely for some minutes; then, as the jokey man didn’t speak, he continued earnestly, “You see, she can just hear that there is music and singing when the windows are open, and it’s so tantalizing, and you see it would be rude to walk away when we’d heard you, and come back next time you sang, wouldn’t it? It doesn’t matter for boys—”

“I’m not at all sure of that,” said Mr. Smith hastily; “it matters very much for boys too, I think—especially if they don’t happen to have wise grandfathers with good taste. I’ll see what can be done, and let you know.”

“Oh, thank you so much!” cried Basil, “that is kind of you. Viola will be so pleased; she’s up the village now with Polly, or I’d fetch her to thank you herself.”

Now, while Basil was talking he noticed that the jokey man’s coat had got leather on the shoulders, and that the leather looked as worn as the coat, so he rightly deduced that at some time or another his new friend must have been something of a sportsman, and asked, “D’ you fish at all?”

“Not here,” said the jokey man, “but I’ve done some fishing in my time. Have you had good sport?”

Then immediately ensued a long discussion on the relative merits of flies, and Basil gave forth his opinion, an opinion backed up by the experience of numerous natives, that the “Coachman” was the fly for that neighborhood, but that there were occasions, especially early in July, when exceedingly good results might be obtained by using red ants. They told each other fishing stories. Basil confided to the jokey man that he had just got a beautiful new split cane rod from “Hardy Brothers,” promised to show it to him at the earliest possible opportunity, and they speedily became the best of friends. For it is a curious fact that although the actual sport itself is a somewhat taciturn pursuit, there are no more conversational sportsmen in the world than ardent followers of the gentle craft.

Another thing—they are always courteous listeners, and generally full of good stories themselves, yet have the most delicate appreciation of other people’s anecdotes. You can nearly always tell a member of a fishing family by this rare and pleasing trait.

Next morning the jokey man called at the hotel and asked for Basil at the door. He wouldn’t come in, and when Basil, greatly excited, appeared, only waited to say hastily, “If you like to bring your sister to-night, I think I can promise you that it will be all right.” Then fled before Basil could thank him, and was soon pounding up the steep hill that ends abruptly at the

hotel door, as though he were training for a mountaineering race.

Basil tore back into their sitting-room to lay the case before his grandfather, who, for once, was lunching in the hotel. "He promised, you know," he concluded jubilantly, "so she *can* come, can't she?"

Grandfather pulled his moustache and laughed. Then Viola came and laid her fresh soft cheek against his, murmuring pleadingly, "Darling, it would be so lovely," till he pinched Viola's cheek and made stipulations about heavy cloaks, and the children knew the day was won.

And the end of it all was that, at half-past eight that evening, grandfather, Basil, and Viola were seated on three chairs in the very middle of the road that ran past the *Alfresco Entertainers'* stage; but as the road ends abruptly in a precipitous rock some thirty yards further along, there is no fear of being run over by traffic.

What an evening of delight that was! How Basil and Viola laughed, and how pleased was grandfather! Another thing is quite certain—that the *Alfresco Entertainers* in no way lost by the alterations they had made in their programme; the rest of the audience seemed as pleased as Basil and Viola, and no one appeared to miss the "giddy little girl in the big black hat" the least little bit in the world.

"Really, it's vastly civil of Mr. Thingummy," said grandfather on their way home.

Grandfather and Harnet had gone fishing for the whole day. Mademoiselle had departed, only Polly was left in charge, and she had so bad a headache—she put it down to the close, cloudy weather—that she was fain to go and lie down directly she had waited upon Basil and Viola at their lunch, having given the children permission to go for a walk along the beach.

It was a grey day, humid and still, and, being low tide, there seemed no fresh wind blowing in from the sea as usual. The children scrambled over the rocks, very happy and important at being, for once, left to their own devices, and they decided to make an expedition to a little sandy bay that can be reached from the shore at low tide, and to come back by a steep winding path up the cliffs which terminates in the coach road just above the village. They had not considered it necessary to confide their intention to Polly, who would certainly have objected. They reached the bay all right, paddled for a time on the hard, smooth sand, and then set out to climb the path which winds in and out of the side of the cliff for all the world like a spiral staircase up to some nine hundred feet above the sea. This path is so narrow that travellers can only walk in Indian file. On the one side is the steep face of the heather-clad rock, on the other a sheer drop on to the rocks below.

When the children had climbed about a third of the way they found themselves enveloped in white mist—a mist so thick, and fine, and clinging that you cannot see your own hand held before your face. It was no use to go down again; the tide had turned, and soon the sea would be lapping gently at the foot of the pathway. There was nothing for it but to go on slowly, carefully, step by step, feeling all the time for the rocks on the inner side; by-and-by the path would widen.

"Don't be frightened, Viola," said Basil cheerfully. "It'll take us a goodish while, but a bit higher up we can walk together."

"I'm not exactly frightened," said Viola in a tremulous voice, "but I rather wish we hadn't come."

"So do I," Basil answered fervently. "If I hadn't been such a juggins I'd

have looked up and seen the mist on those cliffs long ago. Probably you can't see that there *are* any cliffs in the village now."

On they toiled, slowly and painfully. It is really a most unpleasant mode of progression, walking sideways up a hill with your back against a very nubbly sort of wall.

"Hark!" cried Basil presently. "Didn't you hear a call?"

The children paused, leant against the cliff, and listened breathlessly. Sure enough someone was calling. It sounded very muffled and far off; but it was plainly a man's voice, and he was calling for help.

"Do you think it's above or below?" Basil asked anxiously. "I can't seem to tell in this fog."

"It must be above, or we should have heard it before. Call out that we're coming."

Basil shouted with all the force of his young lungs, and again the faint, muffled voice answered with a cry for help.

"Come on," exclaimed Basil in great excitement; "we'll find him!" and sure enough in another bend of the path Basil nearly fell over the prostrate figure of a man lying right across it, for here it suddenly grew wider. The man raised himself on his elbow, exclaiming:

"I say, do you think that when you get to the village you could send help? I'm very much afraid that I've broken my leg. I can't stand, and moving at all hurts no end."

"Why, it's the jokey man!" Basil cried out in dismay. "However did you do it?"

"Oh, dear—oh, dear!" added Viola, "this is sad."

None of them could see the other, but nevertheless the jokey man knew in a minute who had come to his rescue, and forgot his injuries in his surprise, exclaiming, "Whatever are you

two doing here? Is the General with you?"

"Oh, dear, no," said Viola proudly; "we're *quite* alone, or we shouldn't be here, but isn't it a good thing we *are* here; how did you fall?"

"I was mooning along, not thinking where I was going, when down came the mist. I made a false step and went bang over the edge, but only fell on to the path below, not right over as I might have done. . . . Perhaps it would have been better if I had," he added to himself.

"You'd better go and get help, Basil," said Viola decided, "and I'll stay and take care of Mr. Smith till they come."

But Mr. Smith wouldn't hear of this. The children helped him to crawl as near the inner side as possible, and when they left him he nearly fainted with the pain of moving. It began to rain, the cold soft wetting rain of a Devonshire summer, and Mr. Smith groaned and shivered. "I am so sorry for you," said a soft voice close beside him. "Is there nothing I could do? Wouldn't you be more comfortable if you were to rest your head in my lap? It would be a sort of pillow. Daddie used to go to sleep like that sometimes out on the moors last summer, when they were home."

"Oh, Viola, Viola!" exclaimed the jokey man with far more distress than he had yet shown, "why did you stay? You will get cold. It's raining already, and they will be ages."

"There's no use worrying about that," said Viola, edging herself nearer. "We couldn't leave you here all alone and hurt, and Basil wouldn't let me go on to the village 'cause of the fog, so of course I stayed. I hope you won't mind very much; I won't talk if you'd rather not, but I think I'd like to hold your hand if you don't mind. It would be comforting."

The kind little hand was curiously comforting to the jokey man; he in-

sisted on taking off his coat and wrapping Viola in it, in spite of all her protests. Presently the white pall of mist lifted a little and they could see one another, and it certainly was a great pleasure to the man lying against the cliff to watch the little high-bred face with the kind blue eyes turned in such friendly wise towards him. Viola was so like Basil, and yet so entirely individual. Basil's face was round, hers was oval: Basil's nose was broad and indefinite as yet, Viola's nose was small and straight and decided, with the dearest little band of freckles across the bridge. Basil's manner was extremely friendly: Viola's was tender and protecting, and it was such a long time since anyone had taken care of the jokey man, that he almost crooned to himself in the delight of being so tended.

She was very tender in her inquiries after his aches and pains, expressed a pious hope that he always wore "something woolly next him," and being reassured on that head, proceeded to suggest that he should smoke if he found it comforting. Then she told him a great deal in very admiring terms about daddy, and grandfather, and Basil, for Viola was of that old-fashioned portion of femininity that looks upon her own mankind as beings of stupendous strength and wisdom. The man lay watching her very intently, but it is not certain that he heard half of what she was saying. He had the look of one who was trying to make a difficult decision. The voices of habit and tradition called very loudly to him just then—dared he listen?

Presently Viola's voice ceased. She was evidently waiting for an answer, and none came. "Have you any sisters, Mr. Smith?" she repeated.

Mr. Smith shook his head, then he raised himself on his elbow, saying earnestly, "Look here, Viola! I want you to tell me exactly what you think

about something. Suppose Basil—of course it's utterly impossible, but still—suppose that when he was grown up he did something that annoyed you all very much, something disappointing and entirely against his father's wishes," he paused, for Viola looked very grave and pained, "and then," he continued, "if he went right out of sight, and you, none of you, heard anything more about him for nearly a year—supposing *then* he was sorry, said he was sorry—"

"We should never lose sight of Basil," said Viola decidedly, her eyes dark and tragic at the mere thought. "At least, I'm sure I shouldn't; whatever he did I should love him just the same. You don't love people for their goodness—you love them because they're *they*."

"Are you sure?" asked the jokey man earnestly.

Viola looked hard at him, turned very red, and said shyly, "Do you think you could tell me just what you did? I know it's you."

The man leant back against the wall again. "It's not an interesting story," he said wearily, "but it may pass the time. I was at the 'Varsity, Cambridge; I was always very fond of acting, and I was extravagant and lazy too. The very term I went in for my degree I was acting in the A.D.C., and—I was plucked. My father was furious. Then came a whole sheaf of debts. He said I must go back to a small college, live on next to nothing, work, and take my degree. Instead of taking my punishment like a man, I quarrelled with everybody, vowed I'd go on the stage, and came to this. I have kept body and soul together, and I don't think I've done anything to be much ashamed of since, but I'm sick and sorry at the whole business. Yet now that I'm all smashed up and useless it seems somehow mean to go back. My father's a parson, you know,

not over well off, and there are a good many of us."

All the pauses in his story, and there were a good many, had been punctuated by Viola with reassuring little pats, and now that the pause was so long that he seemed to have finished his story, she turned a beaming face towards him. "How *glad* they will be," she exclaimed. "You must write to-night directly you get back. How *glad* your mother will be."

A spasm of pain crossed his face. "My mother died just before I left school," he said.

Viola's eyes filled with tears, and she had just exclaimed, "And you have no sisters either, you poor dear!" when the rescue party, accompanied by Basil and the nearly frantic Polly, appeared just below them. They carried the jokey man to the foot of the cliff and took him back to the village in a boat; and as his ankle proved to be very badly broken he elected to go into the cottage hospital on the hill. The long wait in the wet, that had not in the least hurt Viola, proved altogether too much for the jokey man. That night he became feverish and delirious, and when the children and the General went to ask for him next day, they were told that he was very ill indeed, and that the broken ankle was quite a small matter in comparison with the pneumonia. That evening the doctor called on the General, and directly the performance was over, the General went to see the Alfresco players at their lodgings.

"Do you happen to know who his people are?" the General asked Mrs. Montmorency.

"He never let on that he'd got any folks, poor fellah," she answered with a sob. She had a kind heart if her ankles were thick. "He was never one to talk about himself, and he's never had so much as a postcard by post since he's been here, that I do know.

His real name's not Smith at all; his linen—beautiful and fine his shirts are, too—is all marked 'Selsley'."

"Have you no idea what part of the country he came from?" the General asked, "then we could look in a Directory. It would be a horrible thing if—"

"He joined us in London," Mrs. Montmorency gasped between her sobs, while her tears made little pathways on her painted cheeks. "He hadn't any references, but I persuaded my husband to take him. He carried his references in his face, I said, and so I'm sure we've found it, for a nicer, more obliging, gentlemanly—"

"Do you think, sir," Mr. Montmorency interrupted, "that he told the little lady anything about himself when they were up on the cliff together?"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the General in great excitement, "of course he did; I have it. Who has got a Clergy List?"

Naturally none of the Alfresco players possessed such a work, and it was already too late to knock up the vicar of the parish. But next morning the General called on the vicar very early, and then despatched an exceedingly long telegram to the post-office and several bottles of champagne to the cottage hospital, where Polly, Basil, and Viola hung about the doors all the morning hoping for better news. The Alfresco players got out a green leaflet to the effect that there would be that night a benefit performance for that talented artist Mr. Smith, who had been suddenly stricken down by serious illness. The General seemed to send and receive a great many telegrams, and did not go fishing all that day. At sundown there was no better news at the hospital, and it seemed exceedingly probable that the jokey man would joke no more. The General met the last train, and drove away from the

station accompanied by an elderly, severe-looking clergyman. They stopped at the hospital and the clergyman went in.

The jokey man was so noisy and talked so continuously that the hospital authorities had him moved from the men's surgical ward into a little room by himself. As the matron showed the strange clergyman into this room, a nurse rose from the chair at the bedside. The jokey man's voice was no longer loud, but he kept saying the same thing over and over again. "All day long he keeps repeating it," she whispered. "I'm so thankful you've come, for he can't possibly last if this restlessness continues."

"I'm sure he'll come if you send," the weak, irritable voice went on. "Why don't you send? I want my father—'father, I have sinned'—that's it—'father, I have sinned'—but I know he'll come if you send. I want my father I tell you—why won't you send? I want my father."

The whispering voice persisted in its plaint, the hot hands plucked at the sheet when other hands closed over

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them holding them firmly, and the voice he was waiting for said quietly, "My dear son, I am here."

As the sick man raised his tired eyes to the grave grey face bent over him, his troubled mind was flooded with an immense content, his poignant restlessness was calmed. "Good old father!" he said softly, and lay quite still.

The jokey man thought better of it, and didn't die after all. In another week Basil and Viola were allowed to go and see him. They stood very hushed and solemn on either side of his bed, for he looked very thin and white, and was still lying right on his back which made him seem more ill somehow. For quite a minute nobody said anything at all, till Basil, who held a large folded bracken leaf in his hand, laid it down on the jokey man's chest and spread it out. A fish speckled with brown reposed in solemn glory in the midst. "It's for your dinner," whispered Basil. "It's only four ounces off the pound. I caught it myself two hours ago. Viola saw me do it. I think a 'Coachman' 's the best fly after all."

L. Allen Harker.

A PASSIONATE PILGRIM.

It was said of old that those the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. If ever, in the sane and scientific future, men lose the sense of that great aphorism, they have but to open any one of the polite correspondences and memoirs that poured from the Paris press during the third quarter of the eighteenth century to realize afresh its applicable truth.

Later, even, than 1775, a profound non-recognition prevailed among the ruling classes of the *Mene, Mene* on the wall. They supposed France to be a

singularly constituted country, which, wildly anarchic in speculation, would, in actual fact, continue shackled, until a band of amiable rationalists could replace its feudal fetters by daisy-chains. Though England had undergone revolution and won a constitution a century earlier, and though the new-born American Republic was being idolized and served by Frenchmen, in France scarcely a member of the privileged castes foresaw the *débâcle* ahead. *Lettres de cachet* (price £24 a piece) still flourished, and so did repressive raids

on printing-houses, barbarous punishments, the *Taille*, the *Gabelle*, colossal corruption, and the infamous tax-exemption of clerics, nobles, and Government officials which at last menaced the nation's financial existence.

Side by side with all the enslavement, rapine, and impending bankruptcy, the nobles, with bandaged eyes, but of their own wills, were running violently, as down a steep place, into the sea which was to engulf the whole of their order. That dynamo, the *Encyclopædia*, was the cherished possession of every cultivated person who could pay for its forty folios. "Philosophy," i.e. liberalism, was universally professed in the *salons*. Marie Antoinette, in cambric, and with a crook, abjuring diamonds, gave Sunday balls to domestic nurses, and accomplished a comic opera return to Nature. Louis the Sixteenth's abandonment of every means of rule and self-defence has been deplored by a hundred historians. La Fayette, in blindest good faith, furthered the movement past retrieval. *Egalité d'Orléans* subserved it to the Iscariot extreme.

With an intelligence that is one of the pathetic things of history, with a supreme courtesy of the intellect, the *seigneurs* became *philosophes*, and welcomed the new notions about society that led them later to the guillotine. This phenomenon of an entire class losing its instinct of self-preservation is surely unique. They renounced the creed of absolutism, they deprecated fiscal immunities, they made the most unprejudiced, the most civilized suggestions for stopping up the deficit, and saving the country. Humaneness, virtue (in the public sense) and democratic sentimentalism were the order of the day. Of Voltaire's two Gallic species, the monkeys who mock had changed their skin, the tigers who tear were not yet loosed.

During the third quarter of the French eighteenth century the theory of authority was wholly discredited. Religion (called Sacerdotalism) was pronounced an amalgam of knavery and delusion. Obedience, whether to the state or in family life, was a stupidity. The narrowness of duty offended Nature's pliancy. The one thing needful was for men and women to do what was right in their own eyes. It was the gospel of the illuminated.

This Age of Gold hardly lasted long enough for people to have time to ponder the pungent fact that, in spite of it, passion and *ennui* were as destructive, and worked as great havoc within the breast as in any other remembered period. "I hasten," says Beaumarchais' *Figaro*, "to laugh at everything lest I should have to weep at everything. . . . Who knows if the world will last three weeks longer?" Beneath their puissant air of benignancy, something factitious alloyed the upper classes' acceptance of the new social spirit. Behind the theatric prettinesses of Greuze's portraits we detect an artificiality that is conscious and sick at heart.

On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.

In forcible natures the morbid leaven of disorder set up a positive delirium of the soul, a moral chaos; in those of gentler mould, such as Mlle. de Lespinasse, the subject of this sketch, it took to itself the pensive grace we associate with dying days.

And how each page these people penned is heightened to us by our knowledge of the "Sansculottic Earthquake" that was preparing, and the evidence every sentence gives of their own blindness to its portents! Only to read the enthusiastic references Mlle. de Lespinasse makes to Louis the Sixteenth's reforming administrations, which "will leave a deep trace on the

minds of men," in which "the greatest respect will be shown to property," is to be gripped by just the horror of imagination that clutches us when we look upon the signs of life cut short in Pompeii.

Julie Jeanne Elénoire de Lespinasse, private individual though she was, is one of the most expressive and indispensable witnesses to this strange autumn, that simulated spring, of the old régime. In her *salon*, the *gens de qualité* and the *gens de lettres*, i.e. the revolutionary philosophers, met on common, yet neutral, ground, as they met at Mme. d'Epinal's, as they met at Mme. du Deffand's (though, there, without d'Alembert), and as they met also at Mme. Geoffrin's Wednesday dinners. These were the four headquarters of modernity and fine talk.

The fact is remarkable that without fortune, beauty, or a husband, without command of any one of the fine arts, at the age of thirty-two, and with a stain upon her birth, she should have at once succeeded in gaining the position she held till her death as the cynosure of a circle of all that was brightest in Parisian society.

Like Mrs. Humphry Ward's Eleanor, she was not made to be a writer, but the muse of writers. Yet the crystalline style she puts to use in her correspondence—a style that was literally herself—is only negligible because we are absorbed in the poignancy of her sensations and the terrible intensity of her power of loving. She herself acknowledged her more than Spanish ardency of temperament, and called herself "a soul of fire and pain."

Not till 1902 were her letters to the man she loved too well given to English readers, through the sympathetic translation of Miss Katherine Prescott Wormeley, and, with the exception of the brief, renowned pages Marianna the Nun wrote to the French cavalier, nothing approaching such a confes-

sional of a woman's soul has been opened since the "Epistole" of Héloïse. Fiction occasionally reads like truth, but this truth reads like fiction. It is in a higher, tenser key than ordinary existence, with its average men and women, is capable of; forming, indeed, one of those curiosities of passion which widen the bounds of primitive belief as to the possibilities of human nature. Even to describe the letters, one feels in need of phrases from lyrics, and can only compare the being who passed her days at this fever pitch with the poets' martyrs of love,—Shakespeare's Juliet, Goethe's Margarete, and Browning's Mildred.

Those who demand that woman should be cool and mysterious, virginal and pursued, will not find these love-letters, as, possibly, they would not find any, outside their own collection, to their taste. They will prefer the *bavardage* Mlle. de Lespinasse dictated—from her bath—to her "secretary," d'Alembert, to be transmitted to Condorcet and others.

The portrait prefixed to the new volume by no means bears out the testimony of the contents. Here, Mlle. de Lespinasse is a serene, collected lady, smooth-browed, urbane, discriminative, almost prim. The well-opened eyes are lively, with the liveliness of strong sense, not of superabundant sensibility. The truth was that she owned "two soul-sides," and even her most familiar friends were in the dark as to the passion for the Comte de Guibert that burnt up her life at the age of forty-three. Her heart's unrest did not interfere with her genius for holding *salon*. Her own theory was that the unhappy are liked, because people love to feel themselves feeling, and the sorrows of others provide them with the enjoyment of compassion, without the slightest suffering. One would gladly believe that the grief she expresses in her letters was partly hy-

perabolical, but it is not easy to do so. Her early death helped to witness to her sincerity. Inevitably, the ignominy of her origin, and the depressing circumstances in which her girlhood was spent, robbed her nature of sunshine. It was said that her face never looked young.

She was born in November, 1732. Her mother, then thirty-seven, had, at sixteen, married the Comte d'Albon, a member of one of the most ancient and distinguished families in the province of Lyonnais. Since the birth of their younger child, a son, aged eight, the marriage had lapsed into being merely on official relation. In that class and period, matrimonial semi-detachments were so customary that nobody thought anything of them, and Mme. Geoffrin's quiet reply, when a visitor asked her what had become of the poor little man he used to meet in her salon, who never opened his mouth, "Oh, that was my husband; he is dead!" scarcely satirized *mariage à la mode*. Bacaumont pretends that Cardinal de Tencin was the father of Mlle. de Lespinasse, but the statement is contrary to probability. The neighborhood of course, guessed and gossiped, and Mlle. de Lespinasse, in later years, would not settle at Lyons, on account of old scandal.

She was called Julie, after her mother, and Lespinasse, from one of the d'Albon properties. French society was not austere with regard to an unavowed member of an aristocratic family, and, though the child's position was precarious, she was brought up in the companionship of her half-brother. Madame d'Albon loved her tenderly, and was careful to give her a solid education. Unhappily, she died when Julie was sixteen, and from that hour the girl's life became forlorn and hard.

A small annuity, perhaps equivalent to £40 of modern money, was left her by her mother, and, in addition, she

had been told to open a certain bureau, and take the considerable sum she would find there. Instead, she gave the key to the young M. d'Albon, who, she told him, had more right to the contents of the bureau. This one act symbolized her generous and imprudent character.

She might have claimed a daughter's share of the large inheritance, since she was born during the lifetime of Comte d'Albon, and *pater est quem nuptiae demonstrant*. Nothing reveals her more clearly than a letter of 1775, in which she explains her lifelong refusal to take any such step.

How many eulogies I have usurped on my moderation, my disinterestedness, on the so-called sacrifices that I made to a dear and honored memory, and to the family of d'Albon! That is how the world judges, how it sees. Ah! good God! fools that you are, I do not merit your praises; given wholly up to the happiness of loving and being loved, I needed nothing. I have felt the full value of life. To love and to suffer—that is the climate I wish to inhabit, and not the temperate zone in which live all the fools and all the automatons by whom we are surrounded.

Julie de Lespinasse was secure "from the contagion of the world's slow stain," by reason of her flaming heart.

The girl of sixteen could not remain in the house after her protectress was dead. There was no choice but to turn nun, or to accept the offer made by her half-sister, who had married the Marquis de Vichy Chamron, Madame du Deffand's brother, to come to their château and look after their children. The de Vichys, middle-aged themselves, and judging Mlle. de Lespinasse by the standard of the world, feared to let her go away, lest some day she might return to claim a new division of the d'Albon estate.

So the friendless girl took up the burdens of the domesticated poor re-

lation. In that château on the Loire, the bread of others proved as salt, and the passage of their stairs as steep as they had once done to a more illustrious exile at Verona. Never was Mlle. de Lespinasse more vehement than in her after references to the torments and humiliations she was made to suffer during the five years she remained at Chamrond.

In the summer of 1752, the Marquise de Deffand, not as yet Horace Walpole's dear old blind woman, aged "soixante et mille ans," but with blindness acutely threatening, came to stay with her brother, and discovered the nameless provincial whose Paris *salon* was destined to outrival the mart of wit she held in the room that had once been Mme. de Montespan's in the Convent of Saint Joseph. The distinguished visitor made opportunities to be alone with the fluent, responsive girl, and soon knew all her little chaplet of sorrow, ending with the irrepressible avowal that for over a year she had told Mme. de Vichy she could endure existence in that house no longer.

Mme. du Deffand revolved the matter. Would not Mlle. de Lespinasse, delightful and cultivated as she was, tractable as she appeared, be the very person to be her *demoiselle de compagnie*, and to read to her—a service the impending darkness would, alas, render necessary? She did not long hesitate. She was captivated by the charm possessed by this wonderful young woman, who might even add something, she thought, to the lustre of her evenings. Mme. du Deffand was generous, she could do things in the *style Louis XIV*. "My queen," she wrote to her new friend, "I shall not have the air of seeking to introduce you; I expect to make you desired." Yes, she would create a little new star, attendant on her own orbit. The poor child's eternal devotion was insured.

At first, the d'Albon sister and

brother stonily resisted the proposal. But what were they against two such women as "*la femme Voltaire*" and Mlle. de Lespinasse? Mme. du Deffand took the precaution of laying the bluntest injunction upon her "queen," never, by reason of her altered circumstances, to make any claim upon the d'Albons. Neither was she ever to use the slightest artifice in her behavior to herself, not even "the most trifling little art," no slyness, no subterfuge, no *deviation*. The du Deffand had a far-feeling instinct.

After many delays, and, doubtless, a vast amount of agitation, Mlle. de Lespinasse was installed with the Marquise, at a salary of £16 per annum. The arrangement lasted from 1754 to 1764. She went everywhere with her patroness, to operas, plays, suppers, Versailles. It was immediately evident that society was her element. She possessed the gift, not alone of shining, but of making others shine.

Mme. du Deffand's feasts of reason began at six, and were sometimes, but not often, followed by supper. She resented the high repute of the *bourgeoise* Mme. Geoffrin's dinners, exclaiming contemptuously, "*Combien de bruit pour une omelette au lard!*"

It is difficult for people of to-day to realize the assiduous, the intensive calling of Mme. du Deffand's period, when, daily, for four hours, at least, those in the same set met and talked. One wonders how fresh news and fresh epigrams had time to grow. All the members of that little great world had the note of idle societies—they were absorbingly interested in one another. They wrote "portraits" of their friends while they lived, and read them to ruminant coteries. They composed "eulogies" of them, when they were dead, which they pronounced before that most exclusive of clubs, the Académie Française. Voltaire and the President Hénault could be relied upon

to contribute verses of *personalia* on every imaginable occasion. And *l'esprit, le bon goût, l'eloquence* ruled the whole circle.

Another contrast that strikes the modern reader is how little these people went away. "Displacement is to me detestable," wrote Mlle. de Lespinasse to Condorcet, when she was fifty miles from Paris. The wealthy Mme. Geoffrin never left Paris for a day in her life, except when she paid her remarkable visit to King Stanislas at Warsaw. Mme. du Deffand was equally a fixture. Yet Mme. du Deffand lived to be eighty-three, and Mme. Geoffrin to be seventy-seven.

What reams of futile, charming letters Mme. du Deffand must have dictated to Mlle. de Lespinasse in that yellow-watered silk parlor of hers, decorated with the flame-colored bows—a true Nattier background! Letter-writing, then, was not only a test of "soul," but a means towards celebrity, and the most serious occupation of life. Like Miss Mitford, Mlle. du Lespinasse spent hours in copying out the purple patches from her friends' letters, in order to lend them round. The Parisian mania for *billet*s amazed Horace Walpole, who told George Selwyn of a collection of sixteen thousand from one lady, in a correspondence of only eleven years. "For fear of setting the house on fire if thrown into the chimney, the executors crammed them into the oven."

Even when things went smoothly, existence with Mme. du Deffand was not without hardships. The dark and the light being to her blindness alike, she slept all day, and only rose at six p.m., in time to receive her company. And, late at night, after everybody had left, she, being by no means sleepy, insisted upon being read to till morning.

Yet it was not a grievance on the part of Mlle. de Lespinasse that led to

the duel in which their connection terminated. The scene has often been described—never better than in the rich, fictitious setting of "Lady Rose's Daughter." One afternoon, in 1764, Mme. du Deffand chances to quit her bed an hour earlier than usual. She approaches the small room allotted to her lady companion. She hears the voices of Turgot, Marmontel, Chastellux, d'Alembert, those flowers of her flock, in absorbed conversation. The cream is being stolen off the milk! *Mlle. de Lespinasse holds salon!*

So this is the way the downtrodden, suppliant little governess of ten years back repays her guardian angel! Is this her idea of honor? And how long has this treachery been going on? Mme. du Deffand shrieks with rage. The gentlemen, much distressed, endeavor to explain, to soothe. They might as well argue with a lioness robbed of her whelps. Gone are the light urbanity, the *bon goût*. Only an old, furiously jealous woman, who is stone-blind, remains.

It must be admitted that the straightforwardness Mme. du Deffand had made so indispensable a condition of the original compact was conspicuous by its absence. No doubt, the smouldering antagonism that reconciled Julie de Lespinasse—I had almost followed Mrs. Humphry Ward, and written Julie le Breton—to an act of duplicity had long been accumulating. At a later, and even more acrimonious interview, she charged her employer with having consistently outraged her self-love. We may imagine what withdrawals from Madame of the first consideration, the higher compliment, had become perceptible, leading (during those atrocious vigils when Mademoiselle was ostensibly reading aloud) to what reprisals; and, next evening—again, for Mademoiselle—what exquisite compensation in the incense offered by the great, after which, what

compunctions, scruples, revolts, till, finally, self-justification for the clandestine *salon* was reached. An incalculable amount of human nature went to make up the relations between Mlle. de Lespinasse and Mme. du Deffand.

The rupture was decisive. Mlle. de Lespinasse, in her excitement, swallowed what she believed to be a fatal dose of opium, which, however, only ruined her nerves, and set up the pernicious habit that helped, later, to kill her. Paris split into two camps. Only bold or indifferent spirits looked for a welcome from both ladies. For the rest of her days, Mme. du Deffand detested her former "queen"; disowned d'Alembert for following her; and induced Horace Walpole to dissuade stray Englishmen from setting foot in the *salon* where she was described (though not by the hostess) as "an infamous old cat."

The friends Mlle. de Lespinasse had made during her ten years' novitiate rallied round her to good purpose. They took suitable second-floor rooms for her in the rue Saint Dominique, the Duchesse de Luxembourg presented the furniture, Mme. Geoffrin guaranteed a yearly sum of money, the Duc de Choiseul obtained a small perpetual pension from the King (?). They were all shareholders in a new venture, and their profits were to be Happy Evenings.

The story of d'Alembert's attachment to Julie de Lespinasse is a romance. Like herself, the mathematician was the natural child of a woman of rank, only, in his case, the bitterness of the fact was augmented by his being placed, soon after birth, half-dead, on the steps of a church, there to await the hazardous fate of a foundling. Though both his parents were known, d'Alembert, like his friend, never sought from justice what feeling had denied him.

The foundling grew up to be a man

of science, a master of memoir-writing, a master of style. He was co-editor of the *Encyclopædia* with Diderot, he was perpetual secretary of the Académie. Catherine of Russia did her utmost to persuade him to become her son's tutor, Frederick the Great implored him to settle in Berlin, and, failing that, bestowed on him a pension. Always valetudinarian and *chétil*, at forty-eight, while still lodging with his adopted mother, a glazier's wife, he had so severe an illness, that Mlle. de Lespinasse, whom he worshipped, journeyed all the way from the *faubourg*, undertook the nursing, and, upon his recovery, carried him back with her to her new home in the rue Saint Dominique, whence he never moved again till her death in 1776. He had his rooms, she hers (ten other people had suites in the same building) but in her *salon* he was permanently installed. Their own world saw nothing odd in the situation, and, had d'Alembert been her uncle, there could scarcely have been less tattle. David Hume alone, passing through Paris, employed an epithet respecting their *ménage* that would nowadays come under the law of libel. It is needless to say what additional brilliancy the presence of the social chief of the philosophical party conferred on the de Lespinasse *soirées*, or what a formative education the companionship of such a mind proved to the lady who presided there.

But poor d'Alembert was so ill-advised as to be in love with Mlle. de Lespinasse. Was not everything about her lovable—her sweet, distinguished air, as she moved from group to group, the wistful enthusiasm of her eyes when she heard of any trait of heroism or sensibility, the exquisitely ready sympathy of her hand and voice? He watched the praisers and adorers come and go, he listened to the scraps of confidence, which, "thrilled in a minute erratic," she sometimes gave him, he

ate thankfully of the crumbs which fell from a richer man's table. Only we discern heart-ache under the remark he made about his supposed absorption in geometry. "Do you know this of geometry, that with it one dispenses with a great many things?"

As time went on, and her troubles increased and her health gave way, Mlle. de Lespinasse treated her "chimney-corner" to a good deal of fretfulness and ill-humor. He ascribed it to "muffled, intestine emotion" (as he feelingly called it) consequent upon the death of her earlier and devout lover, M. de Mora. He did not guess that there was another Richmond in the field in the shape of the selfish, living M. de Guibert. "M. d'Alembert is sometimes inclined to think me mad," she wrote penitently. Even without his word for it, we could not doubt that she knew how to make beautiful amends between whiles for her "sharpness."

Society dined, then, in the early afternoon, and supped in the late evening, and during the twelve years that Mlle. de Lespinasse held *salon*, she was in the habit of receiving thirty or more visitors daily between five o'clock and nine. It was not with the frivolities of fashion that she regaled the remarkable men who gathered round her. The quality of her brain was as fine as theirs, she was well-informed, accomplished, she had invariably *le mot juste*, but her culture had taken the right feminine direction of a means towards the expansion, not so palpably of her knowledge as of her sympathy. She possessed a genius for placing her various talkers in relation, for starting topics and discarding them, and across her drawing-room the shadow of "the dominant holder-forth" never fell. Twentieth century talk would have seemed a bungling business to the artists in conversation who filled this *salon* of the old *régime*.

The indescribable thing, glamor of personality, a silent effusion round spoken words, belonged to Mlle. de Lespinasse. And besides possessing this fairy's gift of charm, she seemed to "have the secret of all natures." She lived by tact, consciously and unconsciously exerted. Her contemporaries said of her that she was the soul of a conversation, but never allowed herself to be its object; that she made simple remarks, but never in a common way; and she herself reveals her social secret when she writes,

I have felt a hundred times that I pleased by the impression I received of the charms and wit of the persons with whom I was; and, in general, I am loved because others believe and see that they are making an effect on me; and not because of the effect I make on them.

She says a good deal in her letters of "the sixth sense, soul." In the mouths of sentimentalists, "soul" is apt to be a word of variable and dubious import, but the definition she gives of it is brief and golden. "Mind is the part of us which thinks, but soul is the capacity to feel."

Mlle. de Lespinasse sang her *aubade* to the Revolution with the rest. A rapturous Rousseauite, she adored the dithyrambic literature of apostrophe and tears. She went into ecstasies over that sickly romance, "Le Paysan Perverti," and found the chapter describing the death of Manon "heaven's own language." She largely helped to make the French reputation of Sterne's works, which she imitated, though her "Suite du 'Voyage Sentimental'" is, as might be expected, inferior to Diderot's similarly inspired "Jacques le Fataliste." But above all other novelists, she set him who, in her opinion, best knew "mankind, love, and the passions," Richardson. At every crisis of life she was reminded of some experience of Clarissa Harlowe's. It

might have been better with her had she laid to heart the maxim of Clariissa's correspondent, Miss Howe, "Distance to the men-wretches is best, I say."

It need not surprise us to find that Mlle. de Lespinasse, at the centre of a free-thinking circle, was free-thinking herself. When she describes theology as the stupidest of all the absurd products of the human mind, we catch the authentic note of conversation as it went round the table at Baron d'Holbach's dinners—those cosmopolitan, hospitable dinners that caused his house to be called the *Café de l'Europe*. Superstition, the nemesis of irreligion, dogged Mlle. de Lespinasse, convincing her, among other things, that Fridays were disastrous days.

Rightly, as a society leader, whose *salon* was the ante-chamber to the "Académie," she was most fastidious as to the conventions of manner and speech. D'Alembert, however, reproached her for this. Perhaps he had his eye on de Guibert when he said, addressing her,

... There are men in whom the presence of that quality ["good style"] supplies the lack of all the others; you know them such as they are, weak, selfish, full of airs, incapable of deep and consistent feeling, but agreeable and full of graces, and you have a great inclination to prefer them to your faithful and sincere friends.

Among the latter must be counted the noble-natured Marquis de Condorcet. Condorcet, it appears, bit his nails and his lips, neurotic practices of which Mlle. de Lespinasse intensely disapproved, scolding him for them by letter. Moreover, he bent his body far too much when conversing, and this uncouthness also she strove to correct.

How many of the dazzling duchesses, red-heeled wits, superb archbishops, and urbane abbés who passed their evenings with Mlle. de Lespinasse,

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about to be arrested again, cuts and slashes himself with frantic uncertain hand; gains, not without difficulty, the refuge of death.

But a good number of her friends of the century's seventh decade were already advanced in years. When she started her *salon*, Grimm, the most French of Germans, all face-powder and scent, was one of the lions, and much of the time he could spare from Mme. d'Epinay he spent in the rue Saint Dominique. Diderot, the most German of Frenchmen, was a visitor too, though his hostess found him too didactic for society. It was magnanimous of her to have anything to do with him, considering the use he made of her name in the unseemliest of his dialogues.

Among her more occasional visitors, Lord Shelburne was her favorite, and she would dine out every day to meet him. He, too, in the sedater English fashion, belonged to the school of illumination; he was the leader of the Opposition, he adored Sterne, he had "Intellect, ardor, elevation of soul," there was something about him that reminded her both of de Mora and of de Guibert! On account of what he told her about the English Constitution, she became such an Anglophile as to declare that nothing short of the glory of Voltaire could console her for not having been born English.

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acquaintances seemed at times "souls of papier-maché, still-borns."

"*Mon Dieu!*" she cries, "In Paris how many provincial towns there are! how many fools! how many sham 'importants'!"

And, another day,

I cannot understand the ways of people in society; they amuse themselves and yawn, they have friends and they love no one. All that seems to me deplorable.

Mlle. de Lespinasse found that the difference between herself and the other women she knew was that while they merely wished to be preferred, she needed to be loved. Her tropical tempests of feeling remind us of the Brontës'. She had a like intelligence of love, and to her, too, he came as a lord of terrible aspect. Of love that builds a hell she reports much, of love that builds a heaven next to nothing. Her letters to de Guibert testify to a morbid anguish like the agony of death. She herself said that the weaker she grew the more obsessed she became by one fixed thought. Loss of sleep, long, black, febrile nights turned her love into one of the many forms of aberration undiagnosed by doctors.

The poison that consumed her was not simply love unrequited, but also something subtler. A conflict without end raged within her breast in consequence of the fact that, owing to the relentless malignity of her fate, she had fallen under the glamor of de Guibert before having set *finis* to her attachment to de Mora. She felt this to be a frightful treason, and her remorse was intensified when, returning from Spain after a long illness, de Mora died at Bordeaux about a year later, single-minded, faithful, confiding to the last, and hastening back to Paris and to her.

The Marquis de Mora was a grave, poetic Spaniard, the son of the Spanish Ambassador to the French Court, a man of great promise, and a widower. He was thirty when he died. For six years, dating from 1766, he and this woman who was twelve years his senior were so necessary to each other that, when he had to go to Fontainebleau for ten days he wrote her twenty-two letters, and in plaintive reminiscence, in 1775, she told de Guibert:—

In the midst of the Court dissipation, he being the object in vogue, the centre of fascination to the handsomest women, he had but one purpose, one pleasure; he desired to live in my thoughts; he wished to fill my life; and I remember that during those ten days I went out but once: I expected a letter, and I wrote one!—Ah! those memories kill me!

From the moment of her heart's apostasy the thought of de Mora touched its most painful nerve. And she pressed on it continually. Little by little, she found that her new lover was a showy fribble, and the discovery, though powerless to break his spell, threw into stronger relief the memory of de Mora, whom widow-like, she, no doubt, idealized. Her woes grew out of her temperament, but it would be folly to call them unreal.

The singular duality of sentiment just described is the keynote of the letters to de Guibert, with their oscillations of subject, where present passion and upbraidings alternate with threnodic rhapsodies.

The Comte de Guibert was a man who cut a considerable figure among his contemporaries. He was a soldier, he wrote on tactics, he composed tragedies in verse—on the Gracchi, Anne Boleyn, and what not—he had the honor of reading one of his plays, "Le Connétable de Bourbon," to the King of Prussia, and of producing it under

the special protection of Marie Antoinette.¹ Voltaire said of him that he seemed desirous of attaining fame by all roads—a compliment in which Voltairean irony may easily have lurked. De Guibert was, in fact, a courtier of success, determined to advertise himself, to be in evidence. Mlle. de Lespinasse at last comprehended him when she wrote,

... Oh, *mon ami*, you must be loved before you are known, as you were by me; for after judging you, it would be devoting oneself to hell to pin one's happiness upon you.

Long before she had written,

I am much deceived if you were not born to make the happiness of a vain soul and the despair of a feeling one.

Afterwards, it does not surprise us to find de Guibert saying, in his *post mortem éloge* of Mlle. de Lespinasse, "She is no more! who will spur me to glory?" He was an egoist, a posturer, and in modern language, a fraud.

At first, it was his noble bearing, his grand air that won her, and caused her to believe that Nature had created him for greatness. He, for his part, rejoiced in being distinguished by this *spirituelle* woman, to be attached to whom was to conquer the coteries at a bound. He was well up in the fashionable slang of sensibility, and could shed tears and platitudinize about virtue with the best. We may guess the soft warmth of his lady's eyes, the flattering deference with which she listened, the delicate applause with which she garlanded him.

After a while, de Guibert decided he could swim alone. *La grande amoureuse* was becoming a nuisance. She was too fond. She wrote:—

¹ Paris kissed it, for all that, and sang
"Le Connétable me plaît fort,
Comme on y rit, comme on y dort!"

Ah! *mon Dieu!* neither interest, nor any desire to please,—occasionally a kindness that resembles pity; and *with it all, or without it all*, I love you wildly.... I live in you; I exist because I love you.

He told her she was "exacting," "crabbed," "difficult to please." He returned her other people's letters when she asked for her own, he dropped hers out of his pocket, he enclosed his to her—without a separate envelope—in those to other friends, worse than all, he filled his letters with faults of omission. The *vieille fille* (she was turned forty), the silly *belle ame* had to be shunted.

Besides this, when a young man is poor, he must make it his business to marry money. Genius requires a fulcrum. At this point, the daughter of the Marquis de Courcelles, a delicious young girl, whose figure is even more dazzling than her face, appears on the horizon line.

On June 1st, 1775, de Guibert was married. The very soul of Mlle. de Lespinasse suffered laceration. Her only balm was her belief that it was a *mariage de convenance*. All the same, "Oh, my God! my life is weary," she wrote. Possibly, if, at this stage, she had been removed to Geneva, and placed there under the care of Père Tronchin, with plenty of employment and no drugs, she might have returned to Paris, and reigned over her *salon* another full decade at least.

It was not to be. Three months elapsed, and then de Guibert let her know that his had been a marriage of affection. He had been in love with his young bride for a year before he married her.

The arrow quivered in the quick. More than ever, Mlle. de Lespinasse had recourse to opium. From this date she definitely trod the path towards her end—in her own sad phrase, "*je m'achemine à ma fin.*" In her reply to

"that accursed letter, dated from that place" (the Château de Courcelles) "which paints itself in a manner more horrible than hell was ever painted to Saint Theresa," she wrote:—

I have need to repeat to myself, again and again, that I was loved by M. de Mora, by the noblest, strongest soul, by the most perfect human being who ever existed.

Her words would be ludicrous were they not so unhappy.

If Mlle. de Lespinasse could have cast de Guibert out of her heart even now! But she had always disbelieved in the power of will over the emotions and the affections. After traversing the whole gamut of exasperated passion—reproach, raving, moral contempt, pretended stoicism—she finally plunged anew into paroxysms of love, unwearable, unreserved. And de Guibert kept up a show of sentimental relations with her! Not to lose sight of him, she made friends with his wife, and to this we owe our knowledge of the love-letters, for, in 1809, the widow, having formed a large-minded estimate of their literary uniqueness, called in quick-sighted Barrère as editor, and published them. Their success was so great that a spurious supplement was issued in 1820. It is strange that they should never have been done into English till a year ago.

Poor, untroubled, defeated Mlle. de Lespinasse! Her thinness became emaciation, and still she inspired passions up to the last in better men than de Guibert. But it was he who killed her.

She burned her candle to the very snuff in public. On May 23, 1776, a circle of friends stood weeping round the bed on which she lay; de Guibert among them, though, near the end, she had denied him her door. The nurses raised her up, and she asked "Do I

still live?" Almost immediately after, death cured her of her malady of loving.

The man on whom she had wasted herself, when he wrote her dirge next day, called her *Claire Françoise de Lespinasse!* Perhaps he had the fear of his wife before his eyes; perhaps he had all along been too careless to grasp the right name. He assumed also, as a matter of course, that Julie de Lespinasse had only loved de Mora. It did not occur to him as worth while to burn her letters to himself.

It must be conceded that the majority of people find something displeasing in the part of Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," while to a Helena who is middle-aged the rôle is considered still less becoming. When Mlle. de Lespinasse wrote to Condorcet about a love trouble of *his*, she urged him to discontinue seeing or writing to the object, not merely as a means towards his disenthralment, but because self-respect required it. If she had had will enough to follow her own teaching she would have been a less pitiable woman, and we should have missed a remarkable pathological study and one of the few great expositions of the art of loving.

Sir James Mackintosh thought this journal of a soul "the truest picture of deep passion ever traced by a human being." Not everyone will rate it as he did. And perhaps, to get into tune with so reverberant a monotone of "Love, Love, Love," the average man might do well to take the "Vita Nuova" and "Clarissa Harlowe" as preparatory discipline.

Opinions vary as to the nature of the relations that existed between Mlle. de Lespinasse and de Guibert, de Mora, and d'Alembert. *Le moyen homme sensuel* has assumed what he liked, but the best judges lean to virtue's side. After all, the enigma does not greatly matter to a modern reader of the let-

ters. Mlle. de Lespinasse was not the sort of woman men marry. She may have been worthy to sit by an emperor's side and command him tasks, she was certainly never born to fulfil the manly ideal for wives of "the little colorless and industrious hen bird." Even less was she fitted to attain women's ideal for wives, of being a husband's clear, cold corrective. Hers was a "soul of fire and pain." She wrote, near the end, to de Guibert:

When my forces are exhausted by grief, then I love you with tenderness; when I am inspired, when my soul has its spring, then I love you with passion. The last breath of my life will be still the expression of my feeling. I love you.

The inventory of the furniture and belongings left by Mlle. de Lespinasse is a valuable historical document. It is most refreshing to find that, in spite of her wrung heart and ever-present sense of the wasting monotony of life, she took sufficient interest in her clothes to have forty-nine dresses in her *armoires* at the date of her death—forty-nine dresses, eleven fans, thirty-nine pairs of gloves—and only thirty pieces of china, all told, for the service of the house. The mourning de Guibert said that her attire had always given the idea of richness vowed to simplicity. She was a person of small means, and always commendably thrifty and frugal; she lived in the narrow spaces of a flat, yet she left behind her an array of *chiffons* Queen Elizabeth herself would not have despised! We can only suppose that she employed a "little" dressmaker.

The wardrobe of this woman who lived to please must have been charming. We read of a dress of *rose tendre* crape, another of "Marie Antoinette" grey satin, another of white-grounded India muslin with little bouquets. Then there were a polonaise and skirt of striped white and green satin, a

robe and petticoat of apricot silk-trimmed blue gauze, a fawn-colored satin pelisse lined with minever (*petigris*), a black satin ditto lined with ermine. What nice things she had!

The cruellest thing Mlle. de Lespinasse ever did was to bequeath to d'Alembert the records that contained the story of her heart from the date when she first met de Guibert, in 1772, at Watelet's country-house. Yet, crushing though the news was, it could not loose the cord of d'Alembert's devotion. His dear housemate of eleven years lay dead, and he could realize nothing beyond "the dreadful loneliness that makes me say each time that I return to my sad dwelling, 'No one is waiting for me; no one will wait for me again.'" The anguish of the eternal separation blotted out all minor wrongs.

Frederick the Great wrote to him in his bereavement, and, with profound good sense, proposed the only consolation the world could offer. He, too, he told him, had had friends, both men and women; he had lost five or six:

... and I thought to die of my grief. By chance these losses fell upon me during the different wars in which I have been engaged,—a time in which I was continually obliged to make and change my arrangements. Those inevitable distractions did, perhaps, prevent me from succumbing to my grief. I strongly wish that some very difficult problem to solve could be proposed to you, which would force you to think of other things. There is, in truth, no remedy but that and time. We are like rivers that keep their name while their waters are for ever changing. When a part of the molecules that compose us are replaced by others, the memory of objects which gave us pleasure or grief is weakened, because, really, we are not the same men, time is renewing us incessantly. This is a thought for the unhappy, and every one who thinks ought to make use of it.

Florence Mary Parsons.

THE DECAY OF AUTHORITY.

When a word descriptive of the matter under consideration has more than one meaning, it is just as well to begin by stating plainly in which of its various significations it is being used. Authority is a word of that kind, for it may be taken to signify absolutely despotic power, legal power, or the power arising from the spontaneous but not slavish deference paid to superior ability, character, or station. It is in that last sense it will be used in this paper.

The despotic power of the Crown has long ceased to be exercised in this country; and, where it still practically exists in other countries, as in Russia and Turkey, the results are not such as to induce those who are anxious for the welfare and dignity of mankind to wish to see it restored. But there are other countries, such for example as Germany and Austro-Hungary, where the power of the Sovereign, though not despotic, is still real and operative, and the result of whose action, a sensible, practical and liberty-loving member of any community might not unreasonably affirm to be beneficent. Whether it is likely to be beneficent or not, and the extent to which it operates, must, it will be truly said, depend in great measure on the character and judgment of the Sovereign himself. The reigning German Emperor is a man of exceptionally superior parts, assiduously cultivated. But his judgment, in the opinion of most persons, which in this respect I share, is far from being equal to his ability. In a private station, and in a community where, as regards political contention at least, personal success is to be obtained by strength of character, brain capacity, a ready and copious command of language, and a striking personality, he

must inevitably have been successful. In America he assuredly would have become a President. In England he would probably have become a Prime Minister, and one much admired by the people. But, being an Emperor-King, though he can descend from time to time into the political arena, he cannot remain there, and by the *lèse majesté* law of Germany, he can strike harder than those whom he strikes at are permitted to strike in return; just as one may suspect that when Commodus descended into the amphitheatre, the gladiators with whom he contended were compelled to fight with blunted weapons, and care was taken that the wild beasts he confronted should be rather of the cowardly than the uncompromisingly ferocious kind. Few, however, I should think, would not allow that the German Emperor appears too often in the political arena, and that he thereby cheapens, and to that extent diminishes, the influence he is eager to exercise. No such criticism can be passed on the Sovereign of Austro-Hungary. It would be difficult to indicate a single occasion during the last forty years, in which the recognized Constitutional power of Francis Joseph II. has not been exerted for the benefit of his subjects and of Europe, and, were it possible to guarantee a succession of Sovereigns equally wise, judicial, and dispassionate, the most advanced advocate of democracy, unless he were a monomaniacal theorist, would incline to the belief that their existence and maintenance would be for the good of any nation, in any circumstances. Unfortunately, no such guarantee can be obtained; and it is the general and probably not incorrect opinion that upon his individual life may depend the coherence and, there-

fore, the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

There is little, therefore, in such power of the Crown as we have just been considering to justify or even encourage the desire to see it introduced into our own polity. But there is a power of the Crown less than this, but withal not inconsiderable, which may accurately be designated authority in the sense in which I have said the word will here be employed; and such authority, dependent on the deference paid to superiority of station, character, and ability, still unquestionably may exist among us, though always within limits. Queen Victoria, in the later years of her reign, exercised this authority, partly because of the ever-growing belief of the nation in her impersonal wisdom and her dispassionate-ness of judgment; and partly also, it must be added, because of the conservative revulsion of sentiment and opinion caused by the intemperate action and the uncircumspect legislation of Mr. Gladstone and his, for a time, numerous and admiring followers. But, in the heyday of his vociferous popularity, the knowledge that the Queen had serious misgivings as to his Irish policy, beginning with the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, had no effect whatever in preventing or delaying the impetuous course in which that vigorous man of action but unstatesmanlike Minister had embarked; and it may be suspected that, amongst ourselves, the authority of the Crown can operate in the sphere of party politics only where there already exists, in the nation, a community of opinion between the majority and the Sovereign. But is not that almost equivalent to saying that, in the sphere of party politics—and all politics in Great Britain and Ireland are party politics—it operates very imperfectly?

But party politics, though they at

present occupy too much of the interest and energy of the nation, are far from exhausting those public affairs on which the general welfare of the community depends; and there are several spheres of activity and influence in which the authority of the Crown may still be exerted without provoking hostile comment or exciting jealous feeling. The effective organization of the naval and military forces is among these; but, until the Crown takes a larger view of its opportunities and responsibilities regarding them, its authority will remain slight, and, in so far as its exercise is permitted, will be injurious rather than beneficial. An impression widely exists, whether correctly or otherwise I could not confidently and conscientiously affirm, that the authority of the Crown in connection with the Navy and the Army concerns itself rather with appearance than with efficiency, rather with nominations and promotions than with practical and businesslike organization; and one fears this must be so as long as the Crown has a merely titular and not a really personal connection with them, which is to be acquired only by actual professional service with one or other of them.

Literature and the other arts constitute another department of the nation's real interests in which the Crown might exercise authority, but at present exercises little or none, or exercises it in deferential dependence on the opinion of those who strive to get clannish, not to say cliquish, views accepted as the opinion of the more cultured portion of the nation, which, as must obviously be the case under such conditions, it is not. In regard to literature and the arts, the Crown seems to have no opinion of its own, perhaps because it is but moderately interested in them, its intimate acquaintance with the higher literature being, like those of most of its sub-

jects, dormant, and its knowledge of architecture, sculpture, and music perhaps equal to the average English knowledge, but scarcely higher. It is obvious that, with such partial information at its command, the Crown can exercise no effective authority over the formation of sound opinion concerning contemporaneous literature. No one can contribute to such a result, or exercise real influence over it, who lives in awe, not to say in terror, of the Press; the Press that shouts with the loudest and runs with the most eager; and the Crown lives in unnecessary awe of the Press.

The attitude of the Crown in this country towards the other arts may at first sight seem to be more satisfactory, but the difference is superficial and specious rather than real. The Royal Academy is a conspicuous and active Corporation, and crowned heads have always been interested in artists who paint portraits and can represent on canvas Court ceremonials. The annual dinner of the Royal Academy has for many years been honored by the presence of some member of the Royal Family, and is attended by Cabinet Ministers, bishops, and prominent soldiers. Its dinner is a sort of summer copy of the Lord Mayor's autumnal banquet, the one taking place in November, the other in May; and everybody is well aware that its main object is to advertise its annual exhibition, and to promote the sale of modern pictures, rather than the aesthetic amelioration of the pictorial art. Sculpture and architecture, though both of these, as arts, rank higher, in the estimation of truly artistic minds, than painting, excite but a secondary interest in the Crown, save when monumental royal sarcophagi are needed. Music alone remains to be considered, and nearly every one receives some sort of pleasure from music; but, though the British people generally could not accu-

rately be said not to like music, unfortunately they like inferior music, so they for the most part prefer inferior sculpture, inferior literature, and inferior pictures. In this respect, the Crown either naturally resembles its subjects, or affects to do so out of constitutional deference to national taste. No one, it is true, could allege that the Crown does not assiduously patronize the stage; but whether its preference is for the higher drama, in so far as such at present exists among us, or for plays of a less elevated kind, it might be invidious to inquire. That the Crown may exert, or at least endeavor to exert, personal authority on these matters, may be gathered from the opinions independently formed and courageously expressed by the reigning German Emperor on contemporaneous literature and art. I am not concerned, here, to inquire if his views be sound or the reverse. But he has the courage of his convictions, and is evidently of the opinion expressed with so much elevation of thought and diction by Schiller: "Man has lost his dignity, but art has saved it, and preserved it for him in imperishable marble. Truth still lives in poetic fiction, and from the copy the original may be restored."

There are two national concerns in which the Crown, amongst ourselves, does exercise very active authority. These are benevolence and sport. The members of our Royal Family are never weary of promoting the cause of public charity, of founding and maintaining hospitals, homes for the poor, the sick, the wounded, and the widowed. They are lavish of their money and their time; and the good they do in this respect is incalculable. The Crown, in a constitutionally governed state, can do no nobler work, and here it sets a splendid example, and manifests a truly royal sense, of its duties and responsibilities. With certain branches of sport likewise,

much affected by the British people, it exhibits a continuous and participating sympathy; and the same may be said, to its honor, in connection with agriculture, still the most important, the most heavily tried, and the most laborious of all its industries. It has often occurred to the present writer to ask if, had the nomenclature of the assault on Protection been slightly altered, and had the welfare of agriculture been attacked under the more correct appellation of the Trade of Agriculture, instead of the invidious designation of the Agricultural Interest, Free Trade would have been carried in what most persons now perceive was too extreme, too sweeping, and too uncompromising a manner. Some precautions would have been taken against rainy days, whether actual or metaphorical.

In a community like our own it must be patent to any one that the Crown can exercise great and all-pervading authority in coloring the tone, shaping the manners, and deciding the ideals of society, in respect of pleasures and diversions. It can either raise, or lower these by its example, by the preference it shows for nobility of character, dignity of conduct, and decency of morals, or their opposites. *Seruum pecus* is, we fear, still not too harsh a phrase to apply to the bulk of mankind, and to the world of fashion more especially. In an age of rapidly acquired and somewhat ostentatious personal wealth, the Crown is in a position to convey its sympathy, or its want of sympathy, with individuals whose main merit, if it be one, is their colossal affluence, and by its open regard for or neglect of persons eminent for ability, for blameless lives, and for loftiness of speech and sentiments.

I am not unaware that, in the treatment of subjects not incorrectly designated delicate, I have written perhaps with unaccustomed frankness. Wishing still to be candid, I do not

hesitate to say that, on the whole, and all attendant conditions and circumstances duly considered, the Crown has for some time past exerted, and does still exert, its possible authority wisely and well. It should never be forgotten that, in a community of free people, the Crown will be pretty much what the nation makes it. We hedge it round with jealous limitations, and should soon remind it, in case of necessity, of the Constitutional admonition, "Thus far, and no farther!" Its authority can be exercised only within more or less well-defined boundaries. But one has written in vain if one has failed to strengthen the conviction that within those boundaries it can exert considerable and most wholesome authority. Its popularity, happily, is still as great as ever. That it may always remain so is the prayer of every wise citizen.

The time was, and well within retrospective vision, when the authority of the territorial aristocracy in the British realm was practically predominant over any other. Those days have passed away, but they have left behind them, alike in local, provincial, national, and imperial affairs, no slight survival of an influence that once was excessive. The common gibe that so-and-so "loves a lord" expresses an attitude that, when correctly understood, and not invidiously travestied, may be predicated of the average Englishman and Irishman unquestionably, if in a much less degree of Scotchmen, nor is it wholly absent from the affections of our democratic Colonial brothers. Experience justifies the belief that a man of what is called ancient lineage, should he at the same time have what Aristotle declared to be practically identical with aristocracy, ancient riches, is more likely to bring a wise, measured, and disinterested judgment to the consideration and treatment of public affairs than one who has had

to spend the earlier portion of his years in acquiring by arduous struggle competency and position. To this general rule there are exceptions, but rather among members of the territorial than of the trading, professional, and non-professional but withal striving and self-advancing class. There are, and always will be, many members of the titled and territorial class whose judgment is neither wise nor measured, and others whose conduct is as unedifying as their opinions are worthless. But there are far fewer self-made men, as they are tersely called, who are as practically sagacious outside their own training and lifelong occupation as they must necessarily be within it; sagacity in the conduct of public affairs depending largely, as it does, on personal and also on transmitted experience, joined to tact and quiet self-command. The British people being, as is recognized even by those who admire or affect to admire them least, a practical people, take note of this fact; and so, though their attitude towards rank may sometimes be more superstitiously deferential than true self-respect can approve, they remain wisely willing to leave leadership in the multifarious public business of life to men who combine with superior station elevated character and adequate ability for the tasks they are willing to perform. Therefore it will only be through their own fault, in other words by abdication rather than by dethronement, that their authority will vanish or be materially lessened. I suspect this is the most important of all the causes of the continuity and prolongation of the generally happy condition of Government and administration in the British Isles. The striking papers recently published in the *Times* on Municipal Trading, the substantial accuracy of which every one conversant with local society and administration will allow, have indicated the serious

dangers to which taxpayers and the community are exposed by entrusting taxation and local government overmuch to persons with whom *noblesse oblige* is not an inherited motto; and every observant looker-on must have observed, in the township or district in which he happens to live, strong confirmatory evidence of the tendency towards corruption accompanying such a situation and such circumstances. But so long as members of the territorial class are ready to be mayors of large towns, to sit on county and parish councils, and in other analogous ways to participate in shaping and securing the general welfare, their authority in those spheres will remain undiminished and unassailed.

At the same time, few phenomena are more worth noting among us than the readiness, the eagerness indeed, with which the territorial class admit to and enrol in their ranks any man who, not born within these, possesses conspicuous ability and manifests patriotic interest in public affairs; and this I believe to be the main secret of the coherence and strength of our commonwealth, as contrasted with the condition of any other European State. In France, an inherited position, notorious attachment to the Church, or even great personal superiority of the independent and uncompromisingly self-respecting sort, is, if not an absolute bar, a hindrance, to a man's admittance to a share in the higher sphere of national Government; while in Germany, on the other hand, the same disqualification attaches to men who lack the credentials of noble origin. Thus in both countries, the State is defrauded of the advantage of the capacity and devotion of a large section of the community; whereas, in England, the gates of Government stand wide open to any and all who show that they deserve to pass through them, and the nation thus enjoys the

blessing of the services of all its ablest and most meritorious sons.

I wish I could see any trace of the exercise of influence on the part of the class we have been considering in the sphere of literature and the other arts. The days of the "noble patrons" of men of letters, happily, are long since over; for, though they often promoted the interest taken in literature by the former, they induced unpleasing dependence and even odious servility on the part of the latter. But the warmest interest in literature may be displayed without patronage on the one hand, or flattery on the other. In these days, the interest of the nation is mainly in politics, society, and sport, and what are called the upper classes are, to all appearance, as indifferent to literature as the so-called lower and far more so than many persons of the middle class. Traditions of literary culture appear to have died out in families where they long existed; and the critical or discriminating faculty in regard to literature and the arts seems as non-existent in the territorial aristocracy as in the bulk of the rest of the community. They seem to read the same rubbish, to admire the same inferior works, and to show the same, if naturally a quieter, enthusiasm for transitory literary and artistic notoriety, now that literature proper can contribute nothing to their glorification and the increase of their power. They are as ready as any of their less fortunately placed fellow citizens to extend an excessive and disproportionate admiration to writers who happen at the same time to be prominent politicians, or, for the moment, popular favorites. They thus contribute to the formation and perpetuation of wrong estimates of authors and their works, instead of correcting or modifying it. In a word, the abdication of their authority in this respect is complete, is a serious defect in their usefulness,

and a blemish on their rank and its opportunities.

It may perhaps be thought that for many years the authority of the Church has been steadily waning. But a closer scrutiny will, I think, far from confirming that view, tend to dispel it. It may be true, and no doubt it is, that people are far less disposed than they once were to yield a conventional acceptance of abstruse theological dogmas; but to question, doubt, or even refuse absolute credence to these is not to challenge the authority of the Church, or rather of the Churches, in the sense in which, be it remembered, the word authority is employed in this paper. Churches and religious creeds are spiritual and moral, or they are nothing: a truth which, doubtless, Tennyson had in his mind when he wrote:

There lives more Faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the Creeds,
and which possibly a living writer of
verse also intended to express in the
lines:

Who once has doubted never quite be-
lieves;
Who once believed will never wholly
doubt.

The vastly increased spiritual vitality and moral activity of the Churches during the last thirty or forty years cannot have failed to bear good fruit, and to have strengthened their authority. I do not lose sight of the opposing influences they have had to encounter; the confusion of thought and demoralization of purpose, if only transitory, engendered by a sudden inroad of scepticism, and even of agnosticism. The increase in the quantity of bestial—the word here is not too strong—and corrupting publications, and the accessibility to them rendered so easy by their cheapness and the ability to read, must be enumerated among the ad-

verse influences with which the Churches have had to contend; not to speak of the relaxation of reverence and rebellion against authority generally, which is one of the displeasing phenomena of our time. Withal, the Churches, nowise discouraged by these hostile currents, and indeed only spurred to yet further energy by their existence, has, I should say, fully if not more than counteracted and counterbalanced them. Nor must we forget that there frequently occur among better natures a revulsion of feeling and a revolt of sentiment against the spiritual and moral corruption to which they have for a time succumbed; and then it is that the unrelaxed and always speaking spiritual voice and moral exhortations of the Churches have the opportunity of operating with the strongest and most enduring effect. More and more the tendency of the Churches is to accept the couplet of Pope in his *Essay on Man* as, if not the whole truth of the matter, a goodly portion of it:

For forms of Faith let graceless zealots fight.
He can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

But if the authority of the Churches, rightly understood, has not waned in our time, and is not waning, the same, unhappily, cannot be said of the authority of literature, once a potent factor in the education and elevation of the community. The higher literature has fallen on evil days, thanks to the ever-increasing multiplication of novels and newspapers that are not literature in any serious signification of the word, and to the prevailing if vaguely held view that upon literature one person's opinion is, as the phrase goes, as good as another's. In the mind of the average reader of to-day, not only are novels and literature synonymous, but novels practically cover the whole

field of literature, though most of them are not literature at all, and few approach anywhere near the higher literature. If some solitary one does so, it is but little noticed and still less read, even though its superiority to even fairly popular novels of the better sort is manifest to any competent appraiser of imaginative literature. The daily and weekly papers, including even those supposed to cultivate exceptional fastidiousness in critical judgment, do little or nothing to correct this mischief; for, if they occasionally indulge in a gibe or a little banter at the expense of a popular but essentially inferior writer, as a rule they devote as much of their space to notices of his work as to those of his betters; and, as to their iterating and reiterating that the works of an unpopular, or non-popular, writer are an honor to literature and the age, they seem to have quite relinquished that portion of their obvious duty. But, indeed, it may be suspected that reviewers are frequently hasty where they are only in part competent judges. Not long ago I happened to read a perfectly courteous and apparently honest notice, in one of our most esteemed critical publications, of a work by a writer deemed by the distinguished of some distinction; and the reviewer, among other remarks, observed that the writer was exclusively English in his temperament and themes, while any one really acquainted with his works could not fail to be aware that at least one-half of them are not English in subject at all, but relate to foreign countries and world-wide themes—in a word, are exceptionally cosmopolitan. One looked, with some curiosity, to see if so grotesque a travesty of the fact would be corrected either by the author himself, or by one of his readers. But apparently neither entered any protest, and I concluded that, being serious persons, they

thought it not worth their while to indicate a blunder that is so common. But how is it possible for readers who require accurate information and guidance to reap any profit from such reviews, which do little more than confirm them in their ignorance and their vague estimate of writers and true literary distinction? It is unfortunately the fact that reviewers, as a rule, no more possess thought-out principles, canons not absolutely inflexible, but more or less fixed and settled, together with a conscious feeling in regard to literature, than do the readers for whom they express opinions and lay down the law with an air of infallible superiority. Oftentimes they are what Tennyson called "indolent reviewers," frequently they are members of some clique, with its personal partialities, grudges, and antipathies; and sometimes they are persons congenitally incapable of distinguishing between the bad, the better, and the best in literature. In the long run, the opinions they express are of no effect, no literary effect at least; but, for a time, they not infrequently do for worthless or inferior books what profuse advertising does for "Fruit Salts" and "Liver Pills." At a country house in the North of England where I was paying a visit a few months ago, there was a well-educated governess of Italian birth and speech, who was familiar likewise with, and fluently spoke, German. The lady of the house told me that this foreign teacher of far more than average education and intelligence had said to her, "You know, madam, though, in accordance with your wish, I speak only Italian or German to your daughters, I am anxious to instruct myself in English literature. Your house abounds in books, both old and new; but I do not see any work of your greatest living novelist." "Who may that be?" the lady asked. A name was then pronounced, known to every one,

including those who, after reading two or three pages of one of her books, do not consider it necessary, and would regard it as very trying, to have to read any more. I have little doubt that this intelligent foreigner had the same sort of impression as to what is called "the greatest living poet," the "greatest living English dramatist," and so on. She was in no degree to blame for her mistake. How could she suppose otherwise?

The authority, therefore, of the Press in regard to literature, save as procuring an ephemeral sale and transitory vogue for authors, is practically extinct, in some degree by its own fault; and, for the rest, in consequence of everybody in these days pleasing himself, judging for himself, and concluding for himself. In Society women are the chief offenders in this respect. Partially familiar with the English version of the Testament, which is true literature of a very high order, and then skipping the interval down to our own time, and tolerably well acquainted perhaps with the poems of Tennyson and other less deservedly well-known writers of a later hour, but absolutely ignorant of the Greek and Latin poets, of Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer, and Spenser, and but very superficially acquainted with Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and even Wordsworth and Byron, they pronounce opinions concerning contemporaneous writers in a tone of ludicrous self-confidence. A man of letters told me not long ago that, dining with a friend whom, not peculiar in that respect, he regards as distinctly a poet, where the only other guests were himself, a prominent politician of far more literary culture than in these days prominent politicians usually possess, and a lady well known in Society, supposed to be "extraordinary clever," the conversation, not unnaturally, now and again reverted to literature. The lady

was the principal conversationalist, though one might have thought that, in such companionship, deferential listening would best have comported with her attainments and the company of which she formed part. When she had gone the host said, "I fear the evening was not quite so successful as I had hoped to make it. The lady perhaps talked a little too much." "My dear fellow," said the other man of letters, "she is a presumptuous chatterbox." Was he wrong? And is she the only loquacious woman in Society answering to that description?

One almost shrinks from writing of the acted drama in connection with literature; for surely, though there may be good and interesting plays imbued with no really good literary flavor, the higher drama demands the latter as an accompanying ingredient. Some little time ago the manager of one of the chief London theatres said, "Our stage is a quarter of a century in advance of the French stage." Thus suddenly taken aback, one who overheard him replied, "Really! I should have thought it was a century behind the French stage, unless you are referring to the manner in which plays are mounted in the two countries." Whether it be from exceptional good-nature, from a motive of self-interest, or from a mixture of both, that the Press shows itself so indulgent to our theatres, I cannot say; but, save for an occasional growl or casual sneer, journalism would seem to be in a conspiracy to lower, or at least not to raise, the standard of the dramatic art among us. In all probability the fundamental cause of the unsatisfactory condition of the English theatre is the low standard of what it should be, entertained by most English playgoers, the occupants of the stalls most of all. These, and the majority of the rest of the audience, go to the play only to be diverted, and they receive the larg-

est amount of diversion from inferior, not from superior plays. They tolerate Shakespeare's dramas from conventional indulgence, if these are presented not too often, and provided they are put on the stage with dazzling scenery and dresses. A young lady, moving in fashionable society, exceptionally gifted and well educated, once told me that she had been to "San Toy"—I think that was its correct name—fifteen times! I never heard of any one having been to a worthier performance a third as often. It would be unjust to reproach, much more to condemn, the managers of theatres with the condition of things thus frankly stated. Doubtless it is frequently aggravated by the circumstance that managers are actors as well as managers, and, while in the latter capacity they have to consider the receipts of the box office at the end of the week, in the former they are too much tempted to accept, and even to have expressly written for them, dramas in which they can play the leading, and, if possible, the one sole commanding, part. But, while actor-managers naturally strive to reconcile self-love with self-interest, a theatre is as much a financial undertaking as a factory or a shop, and must equally produce what the bulk of its customers demand. The root of the evil is in the innately non-literary, frivolous, vulgar preferences of the audience, over whom authority, such as we are considering, exercises no influence whatever. Its decay and dethronement in this direction are, for the present, absolute.

If one were to ask where authority any longer resides, I suspect most persons would reply "In the Press." No answer could well be wider of the mark. An experienced Statesman once said to me:

The English people are little, if at all, influenced by controversy, argument, or reasoning. They are infu-

enced by facts, sometimes by facts altogether irrelevant, but facts which they believe at the moment to be a practical demonstration as to which view of the controversy is the right view. Thus it is often asserted, correctly or the reverse, that Free Trade was carried not by the reasoning of Free Traders, but by the Irish famine; and, in the present instance, we must wait for facts to lead the nation to a decision.

I suspect he was right. For, if one side argues in favor of a certain course, the other side pleads in favor of an opposite one, and controversy but confirms both in their respective views; just as Dr. Johnson said most people travel only to confirm their prejudices. Thus the Press argues, dogmatizes, and inveighs, with little or no real effect; for a certain number of them argue, dogmatize, and inveigh on behalf of one set of measures and politicians, while an equal number are employed in denouncing them. Moreover, newspapers enjoy this signal advantage over prominent politicians, that they can veer like weather-vanes with each gust of popular passion, without any one taking the trouble to point out their change of opinion, which they usually screen with courageous self-possession, by availing themselves of a convenient occasion to remark, "as we always said," and "as we have frequently urged." When the public are, for a time, pretty nearly all of one mind, then newspapers are knit in a bond of professional brotherhood, whether the theme be policy, literature, or any other, but are prepared to fly apart again as soon as the public changes its for a moment unanimous mind; just as the cautious Irish suitor ended his love-letter with the words, "Yours ever, for the present." And this is what incautious people call the influence and authority of the Press! If such persons would only recall what certain newspapers were

saying fifteen or even ten years ago about Mr. Gladstone and his policy, and what they say of these now, they would have an instructive object-lesson as to the depth of the convictions entertained and the real amount of authority exercised by the Press. And if this crucial instance did not convey ample instruction to their minds, they might supplement it by remembering how "that Jew adventurer," that "Semitic charlatan," became the most worshipped Prime Minister of our time. The simple truth is that newspapers, like theatres, are, first and foremost, financial undertakings, and have "got to pay"; and papers that did not watch the wind, and travel with it, would soon cease to be published, save at the expense of some enthusiastic philanthropist either travelling towards the Bankruptcy Court or too rich to be ruined.

It will perhaps seem strange that I should have said nothing about authority in politics. But we are, and for some time have been, sufferers from what may be called the Plague of Politics; and any one who feels this is loth to spread the disease by touching it over much. Moreover, authority, never very decisive in that particular sphere, in the sense, be it remembered, in which the word is here used, is practically extinct. Among political personages, the late Prime Minister is perhaps the only living man to whom any vestige of personal authority and weight could be ascribed; and this was granted to him late in life and only in a moderate degree. Our other prominent politicians, though some of them are men of striking parts and most estimable character, are too much in the thick of the fight, and too wanting in weight, to exercise authority. The House of Commons, though it can still pass Bills and make laws, possesses no authority, and has of recent years greatly suffered in public estimation;

while the House of Lords, thanks partly to contrast, and partly in consequence of its wise deference to the ascertained wishes of the majority of the electoral body, has in the same respect risen. But any attempt on its part to exercise authority in a direction adverse to the will of the majority would excite renewed clamor against it; and this it avoids, since not to do so would be not unwise only, but mischievous.

I think it will be felt, on a general review of what has been written, that authority is decaying, and that the only possible way to arrest its disappearance is for individuals who can obtain a hearing to cultivate carefully whatever ability, judgment, and character they may happen to possess, and to make use of these tactfully and sensibly. Cleverness is so common in these days as to have become almost a byword. But there are among us many men of genuine ability, and there must be many men of ability possessing sound judgment likewise; and they should husband these for the public good. The desire to succeed, as the term is, is nowadays so widespread a malady, that I fear the greater number of men of ability are more anxious to push their own fortunes than to promote the national welfare. Hence the country abounds with young, middle-aged, and even elderly men, "in a hurry," instead of their attending to the admonition addressed by Lord Beaconsfield to the Greeks, after the Con-

gress of Berlin: "Learn to be patient." Statesmen and politicians are far too prone to believe that it is impossible to row effectually against prevailing currents, and publicists and men of letters are much too disposed to act on the same fatalistic creed. One always runs the risk, no doubt, of striving in vain, if one calmly but immovably abides by one's own deliberately arrived at conclusions, instead of sharing the prejudices and participating in the passions of others. But, to a conscientious man, failure such as that is immaterial; and he will continue to remember the injunction of Jouhert, *Mourons en résistant!* But, if an able man, acting in that upright and independent manner, lives long enough, he generally ends by becoming that rare personage, one who speaks with authority. This is so unquestionably in politics, no matter how unaggressive and little combative he may be. But even of men of letters it is equally true. If they be devotees of the higher literature, since, belonging to no clique, nor courting reviewers, nor seeking to propitiate newspapers, they will for a time probably be neglected, and, when they can be ignored no longer, will perhaps be depreciated. But, in the long run, should their merits be genuine, these will have to be acknowledged; and they will, like kings and statesmen, obtain authority by having led the only life, and practised the only arts, that deserve to acquire it.

A Retired Politician.

THE OBERLES.*

BY RENE BAZIN.

VII.

THE VIGIL OF EASTER.

The weather was beautiful. Jean found the plain of Alsace in the full blossoming of Spring, but the sight that he had so longed to see again, only awakened a faint, doubtful joy. He came back from his journey more troubled than he dared confess to himself. It had revealed to him the antagonism of two peoples, or rather of two spirits, the persistence of memory among many poor Alsaciens, the difficulties which their opinions created for them, even when they were held almost secretly. He now understood better that his own part would not be easy in his family, in the works, or in Alsace itself.

The pleasure he had felt, the morning after his return, when his father congratulated him on his report, distracted his thoughts only for a moment. Jean tried in vain to appear light-hearted; he deceived only those who wished to be deceived.

"Jean," said his mother, kissing him as he was about to take his seat at the breakfast table, "I think you are looking finely; the air of Alsheim suits you, does it not? And it is pleasant to be with your poor mother?"

"Ah," said Lucienne quickly, "and I, who thought he had a gloomy expression!"

"Business," explained M. Joseph Oberlé, bending a little towards his son, "the cares of business. He has just handed me a report on which I should like to congratulate him publicly—very well drawn up, very clear, and by

which I can economize greatly, in four places at least, in the transportation of my trees. Father, do you hear?"

The old man bent his head, in assent, but he finished writing on his slate, and showed it to his daughter-in-law:

"Has he heard the tears of the country?"

Madame Monica rubbed out the sentence quickly, with the tips of her fingers. The others looked at one another. They were all embarrassed, as if there had been a painful explanation.

Jean recognized afresh the inward sorrow for which there was no remedy. All the afternoon he worked in the office of the mill, with wandering, distracted thoughts. He reflected that some day Lucienne would be leaving home, but that nothing would be changed; that his grandfather must go, but the division would still be there. All his plans, his hopes that he could create a diversion, be a peacemaker, a bond of union, seemed utterly childish. He saw that Lucienne was right when she laughed at his illusions. No, the trouble was not in his family, it was in all Alsace. Even if he were the only person of his name living in Alsheim, Jean Oberlé must always meet at his door, in the village, among his workmen, his customers, his friends, the same embarrassment at certain moments, the same question. Neither his will nor any will like his could deliver his race, now nor later.

In this distress the thought of seeing Odile again and making her love him, took more imperious hold on his mind. Who but Odile Bastian could make life possible here, bring back scattered and distrustful friends and re-establish the

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name of Oberlé in the respect of old Alsace? He began to see that she was much more than a lovely woman, towards whom the song of his young heart went forth; she was the peace, the dignity, the only strength he could hope for, in the difficult future that awaited him. She was the courageous, faithful comrade whom he needed. And how could he tell her this? How could he find a way to speak freely to her without risk of interruption and without inflicting pain on her sorrowing and jealous family? Evidently not at Alsheim. But then where could he meet her, and how could he arrange the meeting?

All the evening Jean brooded over this.

The morrow, Holy Thursday, was the day when, in all Catholic churches, the Sepulchre is adorned with flowers, branches of trees, embroideries and candles, and when the faithful crowd comes to adore the Host. The air was clear, almost too clear for the season, bringing after it fog or rain. After a friendly talk in M. Philippe Oberlé's room with his mother and Lucienne—the first real family reunion that he had enjoyed in his home—Jean went towards the orchards which lie behind the houses of Alsheim and followed the same road he had taken a few weeks earlier when he had gone to the house of the Bastians. But a little beyond the farm of the Ramspachers he turned with the path which, until then, had been at right angles to the avenue, but now ran beside it, and ended like it in the road to the village. At that point there was untilled land which was often used as a short cut by the farmers in the plain. The neighboring fields were deserted; the road was almost hidden by a knoll planted with nut trees. Jean began to pace back and forth beside the evergreen hedge which bordered the land of the Bastians. He was waiting. He hoped

that Odile would soon pass through the alley on the other side of the hedge, on her way to pray in the church before the Sepulchre.

Former meetings at this very place and on the same day had come to his mind and decided his course. As he turned back for the third time he saw what he had not noticed before.

"How perfect!" he said, in a low voice, "the road was created for her!"

At the end of the avenue, more than two hundred yards away, the gate, the first clumps of trees, and a little of the long roof of the Bastian farm could be seen in a marvellous setting. The old cherry trees had blossomed in the same week with the almonds and the pears. The pear trees blossomed in clusters, the almonds in stars, but the forest cherries transplanted to the plain held up rods of snowy flowers. Around the thick branches, swollen and veined with red by the sap, millions of snowy corollas fluttered and trembled on their slender stems. Each tree flung out its spindles full of flowers on every side. The cherry trees were so old that from one end of the avenue to the other their topmost branches met and mingled. A tribe of bees beat their wings around them. A subtle odor of honey floated through the avenue and was carried by the wind of the plain over the ploughed land and the bare fields which the springtime had surprised. There were no trees in all the wide plain that could compare in splendor with this path through Paradise. But to the right, and quite near, the four nut-trees belonging to the Ramspachers were beginning to put forth their leaves, and with their heavy stems looked like enamels set in the farmhouse walls. Minutes went by. From the tops of the cherry trees the petals of their flowers rained down.

And now a woman is stooping to open the gate. It is she! She stands erect; she comes down the path be-

tween the two borders of grass, but very slowly, because her eyes are lifted. She looks at the white bouquets above her, and a young girl's thought of bridal crowns crosses her mind. Odile does not smile, but her whole face glows, her hands extend unconsciously; her youth responds in gratitude to the greeting of the rejoicing earth. She goes on slowly towards Alsheim. The cherry trees pour down their flowers on her fur cap, her lifted face, her blue woolen dress. She is grave. In her left hand she carries her prayer book, half hidden in the folds of her gown. She believes herself alone. She walks on in the splendor of the day which speaks to her. But there is nothing languid about this girl; she is brave, made for the struggle of life. Her eyes, gazing up to the tops of the trees, are alert, watchful masters of her thoughts; she does not abandon herself to the tempting dream.

She was drawing near; she did not imagine that Jean was waiting for her. The morning meal was over, and from the village of Alsheim rose the usual sounds, the rattling of carts, the barking of dogs, voices of men and children calling to one another, but all softened by distance, scattered in the immense space about them, drowned in the tide of wind, like the noise of a clod of earth which has crumbled away and fallen into the sea.

As she passed, Jean took off his hat and advanced to the other side of the hedge, and the girl who walked between the two walls of flowers, turned her head and looked at him with a glance still full of the Spring that had stirred her heart.

"Ah," she said, "is that you?" And she came at once across the strip of grass in which were planted the cherry trees, to the place where Jean was standing.

"I can no longer come freely to your house as I used to do," said he, "so

I have waited for you here. I want to ask you a favor."

"A favor? How seriously you say that?"

She tried to smile, but her lips refused. They both turned pale.

Jean went on, as if he were announcing an important decision: "I am going up day after to-morrow to Saint Odile—I am going to hear the bells ring for Easter. If you would ask permission to go there too—"

"Have you made a vow?"

He answered: "Something like one, Odile; I must speak to you, and alone—"

Odile made a step backward. She searched Jean's face with a sort of terror to see if she had guessed his meaning aright. He too, on his part, gazed at her with anguish; they were motionless, trembling and at once so near each other and so far, that there was something menacing in their attitude. And, indeed, they both knew that in this moment the peace of their lives was threatened. They were not children, but a man and a woman of a strong and passionate race. All the powers of their souls asserted themselves and threw aside empty forms because in the simple words "I must speak to you," Odile had heard the call of a heart that gave itself and demanded a return.

In the deserted avenue the old cherry trees lifted their white rods, and in the cup of each blossom dwelt the fullness of Spring.

"Day after to-morrow? At Saint Odile? To hear the bells ring?"

She repeated his words to gain time, to look deeper into those eyes which gazed upon her, and which were like the green depths of the forest. There was a sudden lull in the plain nearby; the wind ceased to blow for a moment.

"I will go," said Odile.

There were no farther explanations.

A carriage rolled along on the road. A man closed the gate of the Bastians' farm. But what there was to say, had been said.

In their hearts the words resounded infinitely. They were no longer mere words. Each one held the sacred moment of their meeting, and closed over it as the furrows of the earth close when the sowing is done and the life begins to spring.

Odile went on. Jean gazed after her in her strong, fresh beauty, as she disappeared down the road. She walked well, without any swinging of the body: above her white neck Jean imagined the great black bow worn by the Alsatians beyond Strasbourg. She no longer looked up at the cherry trees; her hands let fall her dress, which dragged on the grass, moving with it the fallen petals, which stirred a little longer before dying.

* * * * *

The day after to-morrow was long in coming. Jean said to his father, "There are some pilgrims going up yonder on Holy Saturday to hear the bells ring for Easter. I have never been there at this season. If you have no objection I should like to go too."

There was no objection.

That day, on waking, Jean opened his window. There was a thick fog. The fields a hundred yards from the house were invisible.

"You will not go in such weather?" asked Lucienne, as her brother came into the dining-room where she was taking her chocolate.

"Yes, I am going."

"You can see nothing."

"But I can hear."

"Is it very interesting?"

"Very."

"Then take me."

She had no desire to climb up to Sainte Odile. Dressed in a light morning gown trimmed with lace, and leisurely sipping her chocolate, she only wanted

to detain her brother as he passed and to embrace him.

"But, seriously, are you going to make a sort of pilgrimage up there?"

"Yes, a sort—"

Bent over her cup, Lucienne did not see the swift smile that accompanied these words. She went on with a tinge of bitterness: "I am not very religious, you know; I perform my duties as a Catholic very poorly—acts of piety don't attract me. But you have more faith, and I am going to tell you what you ought to ask for. Believe me, it will be well worth a pilgrimage."

She suddenly changed her tone; it became eager and passionate, her eyebrows were raised over eyes at once wilful and affectionate, and she continued: "You must ask for the impossible woman that you need in order to live here. When I am gone, married, life will be terrible here. You will have to bear the burden alone of all the family quarrels, and the distrust of the peasants. You will have nobody to complain to—it is a great rôle for some one. Ask for a wife strong enough and gay enough and with a good enough conscience to play it, since you have chosen to live in Alsheim. You see my wish is a kind one."

"A very kind one."

They kissed each other.

"Au revoir, pilgrim. Good luck!"

"Adieu." He was soon in the park, and going through the iron gate he climbed the hills beyond the vineyards, and entered the forest.

It also was filled with fog. The crowded masses of firs loomed gray from the bank of one torrent to another, and were lost behind him in a mist without sun or shade. Jean did not follow the beaten track. He went along gaily, climbing through the great trees where the ground was not too steep, stopping now and then to take breath or to discover whether above

or below, in the mystery of the mountain, impenetrable to the sight, he could hear the voice of Odile or of some group of pilgrims. But he could hear nothing but the running water, or the voice of some stranger calling to his dog, or the timid cry of some poor man from Obernai who had come to the wood with his child in spite of the order forbidding the gathering of wood except on Thursday. But must not the pot boil on Easter Day? and was it not a divine protection from the guards, this fog which hid one so completely?

Jean enjoyed the difficult and lonely ascent. As he mounted higher the thought of Odile grew more imperious, and he rejoiced that he had chosen for their meeting this place sacred to Alsace, and this day with its double charm.

Everywhere around him the spleenwort which clothed the rocky slopes unrolled its velvet crosiers; on the runners of the year-old honeysuckle there were leaves, every six inches; the first strawberry vines were in flower, and the first forget-me-nots; the geraniums, so beautiful at Sainte Odile, raised their hairy stems, and the crowds of blueberries, bilberries, raspberry bushes, the whole undergrowth of the forest, began to pour forth on the breeze the perfume of their mounting sap. The fog kept in these odors like a net and held them against the sides of the Vosges.

Jean passed near Heidenbruch, looked at the green shutters and went his way. "Uncle Ulrich," he murmured, "you would be glad to see me, and to know where I am going and with whom I hope to be presently." Fidèle barked sleepily, but did not rush out. The mountain was still deserted. A buzzard cried above the fog. Jean, who had not been here since his childhood, enjoyed the wilderness and the solitude. He reached the

highest land, which belongs to the Bishopric of Strasbourg, and recalling the impressions of the school boy, followed for a long time the "pagan wall" which surrounds the summit in a circuit of six miles. At noon, having passed the rock of Mannelstein, he entered the court of the convent built on the top of the mountain, a crown of ancient stones rising above the summits of the forest trees, where he found no crowd, but wagons unhitched and horses fastened to the trunks of the old lindens which had grown in this altitude, one hardly knew how, and now covered nearly the whole space between the walls with their branches. Jean recalled the road. He directed his steps toward the chapels to the right. He merely passed through the first, but in the second he stopped before the shrine where one may see the reclining waxen statue of the patron saint of Alsace, Sainte Odile, very lovely with her rose-tinted face, her veil, her gold cross, and her violet mantle lined with ermine. Jean knelt and with all the strength of his faith prayed for his home, so divided and so sad, and for Odile, that she might not miss this rendezvous whose hour drew so near. As his soul was earnest and sincere he added: "Show us our way! May we follow it together! May we see all obstacles disappear." At that same place all Alsace, for centuries, had knelt and prayed.

He went out then, and proceeded to the refectory, where the nuns had begun to serve the first visitors. Odile was not there. After breakfast, which was very long, constantly interrupted by the arrival of new pilgrims, Jean went out hastily. He descended to the foot of the rock on which the monastery stands, struck into the road which comes from Saint-Nabor, and passed by the fountain of Sainte Odile, posting himself in a thick growth from which he could see a turn of the road. It lay

at his feet, a ribbon of trodden, grassless earth, carpeted with pine needles, and seeming to be suspended in the air, as beyond it the descent was so steep that the mountain could no longer be seen. In clear weather, one could see two wooded spurs which plunged down to the right and the left, but now the view was suddenly closed by the curtain of white fog which hid everything, abyss, slopes, trees. The wind blew the vapors hither and thither, so that they varied constantly in thickness.

It was two o'clock. In an hour the Easter bells would ring. The people who were coming to hear them could not be far from the summit.

Indeed, through the deep silence Jean could hear, coming up from below, fragments of confused talk, barely audible in the forest. Suddenly a phrase whistled, "Formez vos bataillons," warned Jean of the approach of Alsatian students. Two young men, he who had whistled and another who caught up to him, disengaged themselves from the fog and disappeared in the direction of the Abbey.

Then came a young married pair; the woman dressed in black with the front cut out to show her white chemise and on her head a helmet-shaped cap made of lace; the man wearing a velvet striped waistcoat, a coat with a row of copper buttons, and the fur cap.

"Peasants from Wissembourg," thought Jean.

A little later he watched, as they went by chattering, women from Alsheim and Heiligenstein, blooming, but without a trace of Alsatian costume. Among them was a woman from the Munster valley, to be known by her cap of dark stuff drawn tight like the head kerchief of the South, and ornamented in front by a red rosette.

Two minutes more slipped by.

A step was heard through the fog, a priest appeared, old, heavy, wiping

his face as he walked. Two bright little children, doubtless the belated sons of one of the women who had just disappeared, passed him, and both making a bow at the same moment said in Alsatian: "Praised be Jesus Christ, Monsieur le Curé!"

"World without end!" responded the priest.

He did not know them; he only spoke in answer to their ancient and beautiful formula of greeting. Jean, seated, half concealed, near a pine, heard another man, an old man, say as he passed the priest beyond the turning: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" How many times this salutation had echoed beneath the forest roof!

Jean looked before him like one in a dream, who sees only vague forms to which he attaches no ideas. He remained thus for a little while. Then, through the flakes of fog rose a murmur, at first scarcely perceptible, as faint as the song of the smallest bird: "Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed among women!" A second murmur succeeded to the first: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!" A strange agitation and a mysterious certainty preceded the appearance of two women who were approaching.

They were both tall. The oldest was an unmarried woman from Alsheim, with a face the color of the fog, who lived on a little money of her own in the shadow of the church which she dressed on fête days. She looked weary, but she smiled as she recited her rosary. The younger walked erect at the side of the path, on the edge of the descent, and her proud, uplifted head, with its hair of an unshining fairness like beautiful pine bark, and her whole strong and well-proportioned figure, stood out against the pale screen of mist. Jean did not move, but the younger woman saw him and turned her head. Odile smiled, and without interrupting her prayer, she glanced at

the mountain top as if to say, "I will await you there."

The two women did not slacken their steps. With even, steady pace they went on upward, their rosaries swinging to and fro in their hands with the slight swaying of their bodies, and the old forest received them into its shadow.

Jean waited a few moments, then followed the same path. Beyond the turn where the road became straight and crossed the crest, to end in the convent, Jean saw the two travellers again. They were walking fast; their umbrellas were open, for the fog, which still continued, had become wet, and there were outlines of shade under the trees. The sun must be declining towards the summits of the Vosges and the plains of France beyond.

Those who had already made their pilgrimage to the shrine of Sainte Odile, hurried off to the other places consecrated by sacred or profane tradition, the fountain of Sainte Odile, the fountain of Saint Jean, or along the pagan wall by a goat path as far as the rocks of the Mannelstein from which the view was usually so beautiful, over the nearer mountains, over the crests of the Bloss and the Elsberg, over ruined castles lifting their old towers among the pines, Andlau, Spesbourg, Landsberg and others.

Jean saw the travellers cross the court and direct their way towards the chapel. He returned on his steps as far as the entrance to the wind-swept avenue, beside the great building which recalled the outworks of fortresses, and which was crossed from one side to the other by a vaulted porch which served as an entrance.

Ten minutes later Odile came out of the chapel alone, and, guessing that Jean Oberlé was not waiting for her in the crowded court, took the way to the forest. She was dressed as on Holy Thursday, in a dark woolen

dress, but she wore a simple, youthful hat, very becoming with its broad brim caught up on one side with a large knot of tulle. She carried her umbrella and a summer jacket on her arm. She walked rapidly, with her head a little bent as those walk who are not interested in the road, and whose souls are still full of dreams and prayers. When she came near Jean, who stood at the right hand of the portico, she raised her head, and said without stopping: "The woman who came with me is resting. Here I am."

"How good you are to have had faith in me!" said Jean. "Come, Odile." He took his way by her side through the avenue planted with slender trees twisted by the winter storms. He was so startled by the realization of his dream, that he could think of nothing, could speak of nothing but his gratitude to Odile, who went on silently listening only to what he did not say, and as much agitated as he.

At the place where the road began to descend they left it, and took a path which turned around the monastery under the tall crowded pines. There were no lookers on, and Jean felt that the deep, steady eyes of Odile were raised to his. In the wood there was no sound but the drops of fog falling from the leaves.

"I asked you to come here," said Jean, "that you might decide what my life is to be. You have been my friend since my childhood. I wish that you might be my friend forever."

"Have you considered?"

"Everything."

"Even the things that might separate us?"

"What do you mean by that? Of what are you afraid? Is it the coming to a disunited family?"

"No."

"And in fact you would unite it; you would be its joy and peace. What do

you fear? Is it the opposition of my father or yours?"

"That might be overcome," said the young girl.

"Then it is because your mother hates me—for she does hate me, does she not? The other day she was so hard to me, so insulting."

Odile shook her blond head. "She will not believe in you so quickly as my father did, or as I do, but when she sees that your German education has not changed your Alsatian heart she will get over her prejudices." After a moment's silence Odile continued, "I do not think I am mistaken; the present difficulties might be removed by you or me or both of us together. What I fear is what may happen in the future—the least thing which might come now to make all this trouble worse."

"I understand," said Jean; "you fear my father's ambition?"

"Perhaps."

"We have already suffered from that, but he is my father after all; he wishes me to stay with him, he says so every day. When he knows that you, Odile, are my choice, even if he has personal projects which would interfere with our union, surely he will at least put them off. Do not be afraid of such a thing. We shall conquer!"

"We shall conquer!" repeated Odile.

"I am sure of it, Odile. My life would be difficult—impossible almost—if you were not here to sweeten it. It was for your sake that I came back. If I should tell you that in all my wanderings about the world I have never seen another woman who has the charm for me that you have,—how shall I express it? You make me think of a mountain spring, deep and cool! Every time the thought of marriage came to me, your face came with it. I love you, Odile."

He took Odile's hand in his, and with her eyes raised to a rift in the

clouds through which the sun shone, she answered, "And God is my witness, Jean, that I love you!"

A thrill of joy ran through her, and Jean felt her hand tremble. "Yes," he said, gazing at the eyes still fixed on the distance: "We will be victorious over everything! We will overcome all the difficulties born of that terrible question; there is nothing else between us."

"That is true; there is no other question in this corner of the world."

"It poisons everything."

Odile stopped and turned towards Jean, her face shining with the proud and noble love he had longed to inspire. "You mean that it exalts everything! Our quarrels are not mere village quarrels. It is our country we are for, or against. We must always have the courage to make enemies, to be ready to break with old friends who would gladly be faithful to us but who are no longer faithful to Alsace. There is hardly a common act of our lives without its significance. I tell you, Jean, there is something noble in that!"

"You are right, Odile, my beloved."

They paused to enjoy together that enchanting word. Their hearts were in their eyes, they looked at each other trembling. And almost in whispers, though the tops of the pines moving with the wind were their only listeners, they talked of the future as if it were a battle they were beginning.

"Lucienne will be on my side," said Jean, "I shall confide our secret to her. She will help me with her sympathy and her affection, and I count much on her."

"I count on my father," answered Odile. "He is already well disposed to us. But you must be careful not to commit any imprudence that might make him angry. You must not try to see me at Alsheim, nor hurry things in any way."

"The blessed hour of our betrothal—"

And for the first time they smiled at one another. "I love you so deeply," continued Jean, "that I shall not ask for the kiss that I am sure you would grant me. I have not the right yet, and we do not depend entirely upon ourselves, Odile. And then I like to show you how sacred you are to me. But at least tell me that I take away with me some of your heart!"

The lips so near him murmured "Yes," and in a moment she said: "Do you hear, down there? That was the first Easter bell?"

They leaned forward together towards the side where the forest dropped downwards.

"No, that must be only the noise of the wind in the trees."

"Come," she said, "The bells are beginning, and if I am not there when they are ringing, old Rose, who came with me, will gossip."

She led him on, almost in silence, to the foot of the rock. There they separated, to return to the abbey by different paths.

"I will see you again on the terrace," said the young girl.

The light was growing violet in the ravines. It was the hour when the night is not far distant, when the morrow is already rising in the mind of the dreamer.

In a few moments Jean had crossed the court once more, and following the corridors of the monastery came to a door which opened into a garden jutting out in a sharp angle to the east of the battlements. This was the place where all the pilgrims gathered when the weather was clear to see the view of Alsace. A wall about as high as a hand-rail goes round the top of an enormous rock that stands out boldly above the forest. It overlooks the firs which cover the whole mountain side. From the extreme point of the angle as from the lantern of a lighthouse, one can see on the right a great mass

of mountains and in front, to the left, the plain of Alsace. At this moment the fog was divided, for the sun had fallen below the tops of the Vosges. Below the line of their crests all the cloud was gray and dull, while above, the almost horizontal rays of the sun pierced the mist and filled it with color. As the flakes of fog entered the lighted space they were irradiated and drawn upward as if the sunlight summoned their columns to the heights.

At the entrance of the narrow space set apart for the pilgrims and sight-seers was an old man dressed in the costume of the Alsatians to the north of Strasbourg; near him stood the grey-haired priest whom the children had saluted on the mountain in the morning; two steps farther on were the pair of Wissemburgian peasants, and in the narrowest part, sitting on the wall, close together, were the two students, who might have been brothers, with their protruding lips and silky pointed beards parted in the middle, one blond and one chestnut. All these were Alsatians. They spoke to one another occasionally in common-places, after the fashion of strangers. When they saw Jean approaching several of them turned away, and suddenly they felt bound together by the sense of a common race declaring itself in a common distrust.

"Is that fellow a German?" said a voice.

The old man near the priest glanced towards the garden side and answered: "No, he has French moustaches, and looks like one of us."

"I saw him walking with Mademoiselle Odile Bastian of Alsheim," said a young woman. The group, somewhat reassured, was still more so when Jean saluted the old priest in Alsatian, and asked: "Are the clocks of Alsace slow to-day?"

They all smiled, not at his remark, but because they felt at home and at

ease, without any alien companions. Odile came, in her turn, and leaned on the wall, to the right of the first group and opposite to Jean. There was pain in the thought that they loved one another and had spoken their love, but that they could be sure of nothing but themselves.

The clocks were not slow. Through the rising mists the bells sounded shut in and dulled. As they escaped above the cloud it sounded as if every ball of fog burst against the wall like a bubble, pouring on the top of the sacred mount a flood of harmony. "Easter! Easter! The Lord is risen! He has renewed the world and saved mankind! The skies are opened!" Thus the bells of Alsace were singing. The song came from the foot of the mountain, from far, from very far; voices of little bells and voices of great Cathedral bells; voices that never ceased, the sound prolonged in mutterings; voices that fled by, light, intermittent, delicate, like the shuttle through the woof; marvellous choir in which the singers never saw each other; cries of gladness from a crowd of churches; canticles to the eternal Spring, leaping from the depth of the valley veiled in shadow to mingle together on the summit of Sainte Odile. The men gathered on the platform were silent. The very air was praying. Every heart thought of the risen Christ, and some thought also of Alsace.

"There is some blue sky," said a voice.

"Blue sky up there," repeated a woman's voice, dreamily. One hardly distinguished the words through the tumult from the valley, and yet all eyes were raised at once. They could see in the sky through the crowds of mist galloping to the assault of the sun, blue abysses which opened and shut with dizzying rapidity, and below on the slopes the clouds were torn and broken. It was clearing. Now and

then parts of the forest gleamed through openings in the mist, then other parts, black ravines, rocks. Suddenly the last tatters of the fog rose in whirls, just touched the terrace, and swept above it, and there, beneath, lay the plain of Alsace all blue and gold. Then some one cried, "Ah, how beautiful it is!"

Everyone bent forward to see through the gap the plain stretching away ilimitably. Every Alsatian heart was touched. Three hundred villages of their country lay beneath them, scattered through the green of the young spring growths. There they slept, under the sound of the bells—each one only a rose-colored point. The river drew its bar of tarnished silver almost across the horizon. And farther yet the land rose again, its outlines hidden in the fog still hanging above the Rhine. But much nearer, following the slopes of the firs, one could see the forest of Sainte Odile. It thrust out into the valley its promontories of dark verdure with the pale greenness of the nearest meadows nestled between them. All the scene was lighted now only by the still brilliant reflection from the sky. There was nothing striking to attract the eye. Everything melted its shades into one harmony like the voices of the bells. The old Alsatian beside the priest extended his arms and cried out: "I hear the bells of the Cathedral."

He pointed out, in the distance, across the flat earth, the famous spire of Strasbourg Cathedral, like an amethyst. Now that they could see the color of the villages they fancied they could recognize the sound of the bells.

"I," said a voice, "I can hear the carillon of the abbey of Marmontier. How fine it sounds!"

"And I," said another, "can hear the bell of Obernai."

"And I hear Heiligenstein."

The peasant from beyond Wissem-

bourg added, "We are too far away to hear what the bell of Saint George of Haguenau says, but listen—wait—soon?"

The old Alsacian repeated gravely, "I hear the bells of the Cathedral;" then he exclaimed, "But look up there!"

They looked, and saw that the cloud had risen high into the regions where the sun still shone. The mass of mist against the flanks of the mountain had been shapeless but now had spread out across the heavens, as if clusters of gladiolus had been thrown across the Vosges and the plain. Some of them were red as blood, others were paler, and some looked like molten gold. All the watchers standing between the two abysses followed with their eyes the long, luminous track, and observed that it lit up the earth with its reflection, and that the houses of the capital city and the spire of the Cathedral stood out in lurid light from the deepening shadow.

"That looks like what I saw on the night of the 23rd of August, 1870," said the old Alsacian. "I was in this very place—"

Even the youngest knew that date. Their looks rested still more tenderly on the distant spire from which there yet came a faint illumination, and anew, the sound of bells.

"I was here with the wives and daughters from the village down there who had come up here because they were frightened by the sound of the cannon. We could hear the cannon just as we hear the bells; the bombs burst like rockets. The women were crying here where you stand. That was the night when the Library took fire and the Temple-Neuf and the Gallery of paintings. Then a red and yellow smoke began to rise, and the clouds looked like those you see there. Strasbourg was on fire. They fired one hundred and ninety-three thousand shells at Strasbourg!"

One of the young students shook his fist.

"Down with them," growled the other.

The peasant took off his cap and put it under his arm without a word.

The bells grew fewer and fewer. One could no longer hear those of Obernai, or those of Saint-Nabor, nor the others which they had fancied they recognized. The lights seemed to be going out. The night was coming.

Jean saw that the two women were not far from tears, and that everyone was silent.

"Monsieur l'Abbe," said he, "While the bells are ringing for the Resurrection, will you not make a prayer for Alsace?"

"That is good," said the peasant beside the Abbé, "that's good; you are of the country."

And then the weary, heavy face of the priest awakened. There was something broken in his trembling voice; an ancient anguish still fresh spoke through his lips, and he said, while they all gazed towards Strasbourg—the city vanishing in the night—"My God, Thou knowest that we who stand here can see from Thy Sainte Odile, almost all our beloved country, our cities, our villages, our fields. But we cannot see it all; there beyond the mountains is also our country. Thou hast permitted us to be separated. My heart is broken at the thought, for on the other side of the mountains the nation that we love is also beloved by Thee. She is the oldest Christian nation. She has more angels in the heavens because she has more churches and chapels, more holy tombs to defend, more sacred dust mingling with her harvests and her grass, and flowing in the streams that penetrate and nourish her. My God, we have suffered in body and in goods; we suffer still through our memories. But may we never lose them, and may France never forget us!"

Make her still worthier to lead the nations. Give her back her lost sister, who may perhaps return—”

“Amen!”

“As the bells of Easter return!”

“Amen! Amen!” said two men’s voices. “Amen!”

The other watchers wept in silence. Through the cold air came only the thin sound of a single bell. The ringers must have gone down from the spires and bell-towers hidden in the sweep of shadow into which the plain had changed.

Above the high platform of the garden, the darkened cloud, carried towards the west, still edged the crest of the Vosges with violet. In the depths of the sky, stars seemed to show themselves like the evening primroses opening at the same moment under the fir-trees.

Soon there remained only three persons on the terrace; the others had gone as soon as the secret of their Alsatian hearts had been revealed.

The old priest, seeing the two young people standing before him, Odile’s head very near the shoulder of the young man, asked: “Are you betrothed?”

“Alas,” said Jean, “Pray that we may be!”

“I will pray for it. What you said just now was good. May God give you happiness! I hope that you who are young may see once more a French Alsace.” He went away.

“Adieu,” said Odile quickly. “Adieu, Jean—”

She held out her hand, and left him without looking back. Jean leaned against the wall of the terrace. The birds of the night, ospreys, great owls and small owls, mingling their cries, descended from forest to forest. For a quarter of an hour their screams resounded along the mountain. Then perfect silence reigned and peace rose with the perfume of the sleeping mountains.

(To be continued.)

A CENTURY OF FRENCH FICTION.

France enjoys an imaginative life of which few Englishmen are conscious. In Paris, as in the provinces, you may see all the world taking as keen a delight in their own and each other’s lives as the people of the East. They are, in fact, the true gossips of Europe. There they sit, the free enlightened citizens of France, sipping their *absinthe* upon the *terrasse* of a *café*, and seeing in all around them the material of a pleasant comedy. To their quick eyes the men and women of next door seem less the slaves of a hard livelihood than the personages of a romance set in the atmosphere which best be-

fits them. And as in life, so it is in literature. French literature, like French life, is not compelled to run in a groove. It is free to treat whatever material it choose, and its masters long ago discovered that Romance is not mummified in the trappings of the past, but is a breathing image, which knocks at our door, if only we will let her in. At the very moment when the *romantiques* had captured Paris, Théophile Gautier, in an apologue called “*Celle-ci et Celle-là*,” applauded the art of everyday. Poesy, he declared, the daughter of the gods, found nothing so humble that she should disdain

it. "She is not loth," said he, "to leave the blue sky of the East, to flutter her golden wings along her back, and to sit at the head of a truckle-bed in a wretched garret." The ill-furnished room of the enthusiast who counted but twenty years was in Gautier's eyes as poetical as Baiae, as Ischia, as Lago Maggiore itself. So he counsels the young Rodolphe to throw his Spanish or Italian illuminations into the fire, not to transplant himself from his native soil, but to remember that he is a Parisian and a good fellow, which is far better than masquerading as a poor devil of a bandit.

This advice is strange in the mouth of the young hero who led the assault on the first night of "Hernani," and who did not scruple to illuminate his own person with the most brilliant colors. But it is very sound, and it comes back to our memory as we contemplate the "Century of French Romance" which has just been published.¹ For it is certain that the great novelists of France have followed the good counsel of Théophile Gautier. They have recognized the romantic superiority of their own room, though it be a garret, and they have left us a history of modern France, whose truth no documents shall ever upset. Some, of course, like Dumas and Hugo, have sought inspiration in the past; some, like Stendhal and Merimée, have wandered far from their native land. But when all deductions are made, the novelists of France present us with such a record of social life and changing manners as no other literature can afford; they have done yet more than this: they have reinvented their own country, so that you cannot visit Rouen without thinking of Flaubert, and Balzac speaks to you eloquently in every corner of Paris.

¹ *A Century of French Romance.* Edited by Edmund Gosse. With Introductions by Various Hands. 12 volumes. London: Heinemann.

We therefore welcome any series of books which recalls the romances of a romantic people, and to those who have no French we may confidently commend these twelve volumes. The translation is efficiently performed, several of the Introductions are wisely appreciative, and if the publisher had taken the advice which Gautier gave to Rodolphe—"throw your illuminations into the fire"—the books would have been all the better to look at. At the same time, we cannot approve Mr. Gosse's selection. Not only is more than one novelist admitted who has no right to a place among the first twelve of France, but the work chosen does not always most faithfully represent its author. We know not what Dumas the younger, with that preposterous piece of sentimentalism, "La Dame aux Camélias," is doing in this galley. We could easily dispense with M. Octave Feuillet, nor do we think that the two short stories of Prosper Merimée are worthy to take their place by the side of Balzac and Flaubert. Again, Maupassant was above all the master of the short story. His novels are characteristic of him neither in picture nor in sentiment; unable to keep up his own interest for three hundred pages, he can hardly expect to hold ours; and justice could only have been done him by the wise selection of half-a-dozen stories. However, it is idle to expect agreement in so delicate a matter as selection. We must take what we are given and make the best of it.

At the head of them all stands Balzac, the greatest of the moderns, the Atlas who held all France upon his tireless shoulders,—the literary athlete who faced a superhuman task with an assurance which Mr. Henry James, in a luminous essay, very properly describes as "swagger," Swagger, to be sure, it was; swagger, too, abundantly justified by the event. But "bounder," another word used by Mr. James, is

shocking to our respect, and we wish it had not been printed upon the same page with the name of Balzac. Now, Balzac's project was to paint the whole life of France in the colors of reality, and he succeeded supremely well. Yet he was so little a realist that he invented even his own debts. The gigantic task which he set himself left him little time wherein to gather what is commonly known as "experience," and he would have been as false to nature as is Georges Ohnet himself, had he not been gifted, as Shakespeare was gifted, with the power of divination. But once he had invented his characters, and set them in a certain *milieu*, he knew inevitably what they would do and say. Indeed it is from this power of divination that his so-called realism proceeds. The catalogues of furniture, the conscientious descriptions of works of art wherewith his works are padded, merely detract from the effect of reality. In other words, his truth was a truth not of trappings but of character. He created many worlds—Paris, the provinces, the *salons*, the workshops, the theatres, and he understood them all. He was familiar with all classes—nobles, politicians, artists, misers, actresses, thieves—because he had drawn the portrait of every one of them. But in reading his works you feel that the knowledge came from within. This, you say to yourself, is not the fruit of observation. Not even Balzac himself could have lived so many lives, have died so many deaths, and then composed his own romantic history. No; if Balzac were a realist, then he was a realist without experience—a realist who found the truth in his own heart, and who pretended to have seen that which he invented, for the same reason that he fled before the pursuit of imaginary creditors.

It follows, then, that Balzac's reality is nothing but romance, that Rastig-

nac, Lucien de Rubempré, Vautrin, the Hulots and Marneffes, the Nucigens and the Gobsecks, and all the personages who play a part in his vast drama, are as remote from fact as the Musqueteers of Dumas or the fantastic heroes of Victor Hugo. But if not one of them had an actual existence, if their careers are not supported by a single document, they are true both to their age and country. For what Dumas and Hugo did for the France of an earlier date, Balzac did for the France of his own time. He was a sincere, and (in the main) an accurate historian. He neglected no corner of French life, though in painting it he omitted most that was unessential. The result is that no better guide-book for modern France can be found than the "Comédie Humaine." Nor was Balzac unconscious of his own achievement. He was not merely a writer, struggling for a phrase, though struggle he did, and to some purpose. He boldly laid claim to the title of historian, and on this ground claimed a place among the greatest ones of the earth. "The first half of the nineteenth century," said he in 1844, "will be found to have been profoundly influenced by four men—Napoleon, Cuvier, O'Connell, and myself. The first lived upon the blood of Europe, the second espoused the globe, the third became the incarnation of a race, while I shall have carried a whole society in my brain." It is a proud boast, which time has justified.

A century of fiction, then, which puts Honoré de Balzac at its head, with his grandiose aspiration, and his magnificent achievement, cannot but be distinguished. But Balzac is not alone. Even he finds companions worthy of himself. Is there not the old Dumas, careless of schools and titles, resolute only to amuse himself and his readers, whom you live with rather than read, whose high spirits and sense of the open air silence the voice of criticism?

Is there not Hugo, "a great poet," as Mr. Lang says, "and only a considerable novelist," who, despite his absurdities and extravagances, has discovered to your gaze a wild world, peopled by men less or greater than life-size, and governed by forces that are superhuman? But neither Dumas nor Hugo are historians of their time and country. The garret of Rodolphe is not in their eyes synonymous with poetry. No wine-colored sea nor southern sky was too romantic for their temperament. Neither Baiae nor Ischia could daunt their muse, and had Gautier set his two goddesses—"Celle-ci et Celle-là"—before them, there is no doubt to which of the two they would have given the apple.

But they founded no school; they left no disciples; and it is from Balzac that the modern French Romance descends. Flaubert did but graft the theory of Art for Art's sake upon the doctrine of Balzac. He was a realist, who observed as narrowly as Balzac pretended he observed, and at the same time poured out upon realism the flood of his rage and his scorn. But he was not content to observe; he destroyed his artistic peace with a thousand scruples of style and thought. His biography is the record of a bitter struggle with the French tongue, *cette chienne de langue*, as Daudet called it. His mother once told him that "the love of phrases had dried up his heart." It dried up much of his work as well. His conscience would not let him write as he would. "You only succeed in producing an effect by the negation of exuberance," said he; "and exuberance is precisely what charms me." But he put the charmer away, as resolutely as St. Anthony dismissed temptation, and by a sort of irony his masterpiece, "Madame Bovary," though it be not exuberant, cannot escape the charge of irrelevancy.

Yet set "Madame Bovary" by the side

of the best fiction that modern England can show, and you will realize its splendid craftsmanship, its profound sincerity. The worst is that Flaubert, like so many of his countrymen, was the victim of a theory. Balzac, by classing himself with Cuvier, and Zola, by declaring himself a disciple of Claude Bernard, have claimed a place in science as in art, and the most of French novelists have not been content to write their novels; they have aspired to be philosophers as well. They would be realists, or naturalists, or sensitivists, or heaven knows what; yet for all their theories they end by being novelists, like the ordinary Englishman, and in appreciating the comedy of life they surpass us all. But as Oxford is the home of lost causes, so Paris is the home of lost schools. That which to-day is cherished as a gospel is flouted to-morrow as a heresy. Balzac believed himself to be a realist, and he may be regarded in a vague sense as the founder of the realistic school. Yet realism is but a word, for the quality which it denotes is either universal or impossible. The literary art, like every other art, aims at expressing truth in a certain medium; and since all writing is a matter of convention, reality is plainly beyond the reach of man. The most expert of them all can, indeed, do no more than translate reality into the terms of an accepted artifice. Herodotus, for instance, by one broad sweep produced an effect of reality far beyond the reach of Zola, whose trick it was to wrinkle the surface of life with a thousand irrelevant touches.

In England we do not argue about these things. Our novelists go on their way all untroubled by introspective analysis. But the Frenchman, ever since Balzac, has liked to wave a flag, and to fight not merely for victory but for a method. Balzac, indeed, had not long been dead when realism seemed

quite inadequate to the needs of fiction. Flaubert found his comfort in the phrase, and Zola was content with nothing less than the document. Balzac had created a "real" world by the mere force of imagination; Zola was determined to suppress his fancy, and to construct the society of his Rougons and his Macquarts from painfully collected facts. Balzac thought, and a noble edifice rose magnificently to the sky. Zola laid brick upon brick until a stout wall, nicely constructed and buttressed by documents, faced his readers. It was obvious, therefore, that Zola, having found what he believed to be a new method, should look about for a new name. So he called himself a "naturalist," and candidly believed that he was a real innovator. But he was only attempting to solve the same problem which has engrossed the man of letters since the beginning of time, to express the facts of life in the terms of language. Doubtless he sought "truth" with more than common energy; but no man ever purposely pursued falsehood, and Zola was so intent upon the collection of facts that he forgot that their juxtaposition too often robbed them of reality.

Midway between Balzac and Zola come the De Goncourts, the legitimate heirs of the "Comédie Humaine," two godfathers, among many, of modern Naturalism. Now, the brothers De Goncourt aimed at nothing less than the invention of a new literature, expressed in a new style. They would put upon paper nothing more and nothing less than *la vérité vraie*. They believed that Dumas and Balzac had brought discredit upon imagination, and they determined that they would write nothing down that had not been faithfully observed. Moreover, that they might mark the reaction against the novel of adventure, they decided that a state of soul was far more interesting than dramatic movement, and

they boasted, almost pathetically, that they were the "John the Baptist of modern nervousity"! It is a title which few would care to claim, and we cheerfully leave them to the enjoyment of it. However, if you would note the distance which separates the De Goncourts from Balzac, compare "Charles Demainy" with "Les Illusions Perdues," and you cannot resist the conclusion that Balzac has the advantage, not only in romance, but in truth also. The De Goncourts, in fact, were afflicted by an intellectual myopia: they could only see a thing when they were close to it; but even if they approached their eye, they were so intent upon the parts of the object that they missed the significance of the whole. The result was, as Edmond de Goncourt sorrowfully confessed, that the best passages in their books were those which they invented themselves. M. Zola, for instance, was certain that Athanasiadis, the old Greek of "La Faustin," was drawn from life, and it was the one personage in the drama who existed only in the author's brain! After this, who shall doubt that realism is an affair, not of process, but of effect?

Nor was realism the sole aim of the brothers De Goncourt. While they set out to observe as narrowly as Zola, they were determined to pursue the right phrase as ardently as Flaubert. The double ambition was superhuman, and beneath its load MM. de Goncourt stumbled into the pit of pedantry. After all, masterpieces are seldom achieved by those who set about the work in the spirit of advertised reaction, and MM. de Goncourt did but establish their practice upon a reversal of the past. When they came upon the town, fine writing had fallen into disrepute. Stendhal, said Balzac, wrote as the birds sing. He did more than this: he deliberately wrote in an easy, impersonal manner. He made no secret of the prejudice which he felt

against "an artistic style," and he scorned to obtain an effect which in his eyes was illegitimate. But, as always happens, his practice did not conform to his theory. In spite of himself he now and again fell into the style which he affected to despise, and like the rest he proved that a novelist can be no more than a novelist whatever banner he wave in the eye of the world.

We English are not born logicians, and our novelists are not wont to play off one school against the other. But nevertheless the art of fiction has been practised in Great Britain with a fine distinction, and as we contemplate this century of French romance, we cannot help making a comparison. This we do in no spirit of Chauvinism, because we readily recognize that the French have certain qualities—sincerity, courage, style—which our novelists too often lack. Yet we should not despair, if we had to match the twelve masters here represented from our own literature. We would send our champion, Sir Walter, out to break a lance with

Blackwood's Magazine.

Balzac, confident that the battle would be drawn. Dickens and Thackeray might face Daudet and De Goncourt unashamed. And we have a phalanx of women—Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot—who would bear themselves gallantly in the contest. At the top, then, we should not fear defeat. But when we come to the rank and file, our confidence vanishes. Our second-rate novelists could not hold out for a moment against those whom France herself describes as second-rate. It is here, indeed, that the influence of the schools is felt. A formula does but hamper the man of genius, who is a law unto himself. But it keeps the writer of mediocre talent in the strait path, and saves him from wandering in the fantastic byways of ill-digested theology and unknown sciences. However, good fiction is admirable, where'er it be found, and time soon makes an end of mediocrity, whether it be regulated by a formula, or be free to make itself ridiculous without restraint or knowledge.

THE ROMAN JEREMIAH.

A new translation of Juvenal is welcome not only for its own excellent quality, or for the sanity which has refrained from turning a good prose version into a poor verse rendering. Juvenal is welcome in himself. As all men (it has been said) are born either Platonists or Aristotelians, so all satirists are either Horatian or Juvenalian. And while the Horatian way is essentially that of good-humored ridicule, having for its logical descendants the *skit* and *vers de société*, Juvenal is the father of all true and typical satire. Nor among his many descendants is

there a name so great; not that of Dryden, his most authentic son. Dryden has faded, so much as an immortal can; he was contracted, "topical," largely personal; his splendid Muse must needs go forth with a cortége of notes. But Juvenal is of a range which makes him universal: whatever men do, or did in a city which was a microcosm of decivilizing man, came within his stern criticism. Personal quarrels, spites, or criticisms bulk largely in Dryden and Pope, to say nothing of Byron or lesser men: on such poor quarry Juvenal never

stooped. When Pope or Dryden plays the indignant moralist, roused to invective by a degenerate world, we smile: the pose is too obvious, too conventional. Juvenal compels our conviction, our confidence: the whole spirit of the man is so largely, so exaltedly, sincere. Save in the case of an occasional politician (as we should nowadays call him), he never launches a personal attack: his individuals are merely names which head an indictment of general corruption.

This convincing impression of sincerity is the stranger, because his style is what we call rhetorical (a misleading term). But it is spaciously rhetorical. We cannot agree with Mr. Owen, who has translated thirteen satires of Juvenal (Methuen), that it is poetry—the spirit of satire is anti-poetic. But it is magnificent eloquence. His whole eye is on the degeneration of his age and country.

Rome was then as London is now: enervated by wealth, conquest, and long prosperity; a sink for the waste and filth of every nation in the East, West or South, whose corruptions mingled with and overbrimmed her own. Juvenal was a Roman of antique spirit, and they stank in his nostrils, and fretted his heart. In Rome religion was become a ghost; a practical scepticism and agnosticism gave license to crime as he fiercely declared,

There are who think by sightless
Chance all mortal laws are given,
With native force the vasty world
hurries around the heaven,
That Nature in set order leads the
dance of days and years,
Hence swears in any fane his lie the
sneerer, stript of fears.

Nay, in his comprehensive indignation, he accused Heaven itself of partaking the universal degeneracy and corruption. He called for the Saturnian days—

When Juno was a maid, and Jove
realmless in caves Idean;
Was no immortal wassalling in chambers Cyclopean,
No Trojan stripling, no fair dame of
Hercules bare the cup,
Nor Vulcan in black Lipard's forge
would drain the nectar up,
Then wipe his grimy arms. Each god
in those days dined alone;
Nor was there such a rabble of gods
as nowadays we own,
And heaven, oppressed with fewer
powers, a lighter load weighed
Atlas down.
No one had drawn as yet the gloomy
empire of the deep,
Dire Pluto and his ravished bride had
no pale court to keep;
No wheels, no furies, restless stones,
and no swart vulture's pain,
But cheerful Shades led cheerful hours,
without infernal reign.

A more daring rhetorical stroke could not well be in those days, nor a profounder proof of pessimism. Nor were the burglar and the bravo, or the church robber, lacking to Juvenal's vision of Rome:—

Think of the villain stabber, with his
poniard out at hire,
Think of the stealthy sulphur, when
your gate goes up in fire,
The thief of massy temple-cups, sacred
with antique rust,
Of popular gifts, or votive crowns
from monarchs lapped in ancient
dust.

But Mr. Owen has a passage which is a résumé of the analogies between present London and the Rome of Juvenal's invective:—

The follies and evils of oriental and other superstitions find a counterpart in Christian Scientists, affected belief in Buddhism, occultism, spiritualism, and other crazes; fashionable adulteresses, lovers of gossip and scandal, and lady-athletes, have their modern sisters; the licentious Spanish dances still continue, but are not confined to Spain; reckless gambling is as rife, if not more so, now as then; the turf with its attendant evils is a reproduc-

tion of the contests of the circus; the aristocratic soldier, backed by the highest social influence, who is more at home in an atmosphere of horse-flesh and drinking than in his military duties, is not unknown among us; nor is the noble spendthrift, who runs through his money and goes upon the stage, or financiers and others, who make away with the property of the credulous by fraud, or fashionable and wealthy parents, who, by the example of their lives, train up their children to debauchery and folly; the pestilent poets, of whom the satirist speaks bitterly as an affront to letters, are still inconveniently frequent . . . The worst of Nero's crimes was that he murdered the Tale of Troy divine: who shall say whether the encouragement of bad literature is still not among the worst of crimes?

It is no stale and outworn indictment, therefore, which is delivered in these resonant pages; change names, and we are reading of to-day. The more wonder that no one has done for Juvenal what Pope did for Horace in his brilliant imitations—or none since Johnson. Perhaps the grand satire, flashing with point and thunderous energy, the sweeping and majestic verse, rise above the heads of imitators. Nor has Juvenal been fortunate in his metrical translators. Johnson's two imi-

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tations are worth any translation; Dryden has given versions of certain among the satires, some of which, such as that of the famous "Vanity of Human Wishes," are like the curate's egg—excellent in parts; but that is all. And so it is to such an admirable prose rendering as Mr. Owen's that the unclassical reader must go for his knowledge of the Roman Jeremiah. There is, in truth, something of an Hebraic rectitude, sternness, and passion in this watcher of his country's decline. And the final moral which he seems to draw from all, might be represented in the noble lines which Dryden has boldly, but splendidly, Englished:—

One world sufficed not Alexander's mind;
Cooped up he seemed, in earth and seas confined,
And struggling stretched his restless limbs about
This narrow globe to find a passage out.
But entered in the brick-built town, he tried
The grave, and found its strait dimensions wide.
Death only this tremendous truth unfolds,—
The mighty soul, how small a body holds.

SOCIAL DIPLOMACY.

The art of diplomacy is very widely practised in private life. It is, however, a difficult art to criticise, because it is one in which success goes generally unobserved, and failure is almost always apparent. The mark of a proficient diplomatist, if we may be allowed the paradox, is that he should never be recognized. The gaining of his end is his only reward. "There be

many wise men that have secret hearts and transparent countenances," said Bacon. Second-rate diplomacy, however, is often to be seen, and tenth-rate is always before our eyes, for failure never discourages the diplomat. The man or woman who loves it goes on with it, success or none. Roughly speaking, social diplomacy may be divided into two kinds—the offensive and

the defensive—and the two are seldom practised by the same person. The object of the first is as a rule either power or investigation; the object of the second is independence or secrecy. Besides these two great divisions, there are, of course, many smaller ones. There is a diplomacy which is purely beneficent, and there is a diplomacy for which no adequate reason can be given, and which suggests to the mind of the onlooker nothing but the cant phrase, "Art for art's sake." The practisers of this last go a long way round and take a great deal of trouble to get nowhere. To quote Bacon again, "there be that can pack the cards and yet cannot play well."

The commonest form of diplomacy is that employed by a large class of people whose will-power is greatly in excess of their courage. They are determined to rule, but they dare not insist. They are ashamed to implore. If they are to get their own way at all, there is nothing for it but to scheme. But some people who are not timid at all make great use of diplomacy. Obliged by circumstances to control others, they dislike the inevitable jar which comes of the open impact of two wills; they would rather the subordinate person should imagine that he or she is doing as he or she likes. They may like to feel their power, but they have no wish to make their power felt. Often they fail to conceal their tactics, yet those tactics bring them a measure of success. They are perceived and winked at by their object, who yields in feeling that his dignity is saved by the polite fiction that he is acting to please himself. Some such men as these come very nearly into the class of purely benevolent diplomats, but not all. There are those who hate to give pain, and there are those who only hate to see it. If it must be given, they had rather that it came on after they have left. They administer a

narcotic with a wound and leave it to fester. The ranks of purely benevolent diplomacy are chiefly filled by middle-aged women who have successfully brought up large families. Such a one has been for long years determined never to provoke to wrath or to discourage those over whom she has held absolute power. She looks upon herself as a born "third person," always ready to receive confidences, to settle disputes, to call attention to points of agreement, to harmonize discordant characters. She is never tyrannical, and seldom seeks to influence immediate action, but she knows the windings of the human heart as they can only be learned from the young. She knows the tremendous effect of moods upon action, and she realizes that if you can but set some one in the right key, he or she will in all probability strike the right note. She never acts for a selfish end, but seldom without thought and calculation. She is always loved, and is generally described as a simple character,—a description which, if it ever comes to her tired ears, causes her some considerable amusement.

The diplomacy which is carried on for the sake of investigation—the kind practised by those who ask endless small questions in order to obtain sufficient data whereby to calculate the answer to one big one—is a far less respectable art than that which aims at power, and it is the curious diplomatist whose failure is the most ridiculous. The industriously curious usually find out more than is true, and are extremely pleased with their sham gains. As a rule, the person from whom they are trying to get information sees instantly what they are doing and takes pleasure in putting them on the wrong scent. Perhaps a diplomatist has seen or has imagined a love affair and would like to know how much there is in it. Accordingly he or she sounds one of the persons con-

cerned. The victims of love affairs, even in an incipient stage, are generally abnormally sensitive and preternaturally quick. They know in a moment the drift of superficially innocent questions, and put the inquirer purposely upon the wrong scent. The questioner is told wrong, and goes away knowing too much, but subsequent events never show him his folly.

All those who would live in charity with their neighbors make use of a little defensive diplomacy. The Palace of Truth is not the abode of peace, especially if that palace happens to be situated in the country. Who is my neighbor? is an eternal question susceptible only of a parabolic reply; but whether we settle his identity by affinity in London or by propinquity in the country, it is certain that much of our happiness depends on our relations with him. How far there is any moral obligation binding insignificant people to intellectual candor it is not easy to decide. Whether ordinary men are bound to range themselves openly and definitely upon the side of those with whom in their heart of hearts they agree, and how far they should declare their intellectual position to those with whom they are in sympathy but not in agreement, is a question which goes too deep to be treated under the head of social diplomacy. To some men the privacy of their own minds seems to be worth almost any sacrifice. But even those opposite natures who find an atmosphere of mental reserve to be stifling, and who prefer to sail under their own colors, cannot always dispense with diplomatic arts. It is one thing to speak frankly and quite another to be understood correctly. The moral value of open speech lies in the making of a true impression, not the affording of relief to an impatient mind. To speak our whole mind to those to whom we may be pretty sure we shall convey a false impression is

no virtue. It is simply to transform the truth into a species of expletive. For those who live chiefly among the friends of their choice caution in conversation is not so much needed. They all think upon much the same lines, and no one clings so desperately to his own opinions but that he can smilingly bear to hear opposite conclusions announced. Absolute consistency is not expected. No one repeats that mischievous formula which asserts that a man must be one thing or another. Because a man says he is not a Tory he is not set down as a red Radical, because he is not a Churchman he is not therefore considered to be an atheist. But in societies made up of very varied elements differing widely in degree of cultivation the conversational path is full of pitfalls. A careless talker, especially if he talks about people, may often do a great deal of harm. But in every society the man who prides himself on never being diplomatic is generally a nuisance. His defenders declare in his praise that you can always believe him; but when he is especially disagreeable that is just what you are not anxious to do.

A great many people take a dramatic pleasure in administering a slight shock. The effect upon the situation amuses them. They like to throw a small piece of bad news or a harsh criticism at some one, not with any malign desire to wound, but to see the effect of an unpleasant start,—just as when they were boys they would have shot at him unawares with a peashooter. Some people, again, eschew diplomacy out of pure disregard for any one else's feelings. They say what comes first with no thought of its effect. That the very best people make use of diplomacy from time to time in all relations of life we do not doubt. Not only is it allowable for those who would be harmless to be wise, but the

longer a man lives the more sure he becomes that without wisdom it is impossible to be harmless. The great difficulty is to draw a line between

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wisdom and cunning. As a rule they can be differentiated by the test of motive. Wisdom seeks the general welfare, cunning only a special advantage.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

E. P. Dutton & Co. are the American publishers of this year's "Bampton Lectures" which the Rev. W. H. Hutton of St. John's college has been delivering at Oxford. The full title of the lectures is "The Influence of Christianity upon National Character, as illustrated by the Lives and Legends of the English Saints."

Edward Fitzgerald's "Six Dramas of Calderon" have just been reissued in London. It was with reference to these that Fitzgerald wrote to F. Tennyson in 1850: "I have begun to nibble at Spanish." Whether Fitzgerald "nibbled" at Spanish or Persian he infused his own personality into his nibblings.

A correspondent of *The Spectator* calls attention to the excellent English spoken in Ireland. "There is nothing in Ireland," he says, "outside Ulster to resemble the English spoken by the lower classes in Yorkshire or Devonshire. This is a remarkable fact; all or most Irishmen speak with a rich mellifluous brogue, but they speak very pure, correct English." The Academy, assenting to the truth of this statement, adds: The ordinary Irish peasant certainly speaks better English than the ordinary English peasant, though it is by no means always very pure and correct.

Mr. Dobell in his volume upon Charles Lamb prints the following in-

teresting estimate of Lamb by Coleridge:

Charles Lamb has more totality and individuality of character than any other man I know, or have ever known in all my life. In most men we distinguish between the different powers of their intellect as one being predominant over the other. The genius of Wordsworth is greater than his talent, though considerable. The talent of Southey is greater than his genius, though respectable; and so on. But in Charles Lamb it is altogether one; his genius is talent, and his talent is genius, and his heart is as whole as his head. The wild words that come from him sometimes on religious subjects would shock you from the mouth of any other man, but from him they seem mere flashes of fireworks. If an argument seem to his reason not fully true, he bursts out in that odd, desecrating way: yet his will, the inward man, is, I well know, profoundly religious. Watch him, when alone, and you will find him with either a Bible, or an old divine, or an old English poet; in such is his pleasure.

The second volume of the "First Folio" edition of Shakespeare's works, edited by Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke, published by T. Y. Crowell & Co. and exquisitely printed at the De Vinne Press, is "Love's Labour's Lost." It confirms the impression made by the earlier volume of perfect accuracy, delicate typography and adequate annotation. The size is convenient and the page attractive; and to

the advantage of an exact reproduction of the First Folio is added a list of variorum readings. Not the least interesting feature is a collection of "Selected Criticism", from which one may learn what different students and editors of Shakespeare have thought of this play, from Gildon who wrote in 1710, down to George Brandes.

In their "Cambridge Edition" of the Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, Houghton, Mifflin & Co. have achieved what would have been thought, a priori, almost impossible, the presentation of Pope's complete poetical writings in a single well-printed volume of less than seven hundred pages. The two-column page helps to this result, producing condensation without loss of legibility. The edition is now under the general editorial charge of Mr. Bliss Perry, and the work upon this volume has been done by Mr. Henry W. Boynton, whose name is pleasantly familiar to readers of the Atlantic Monthly. The poems are arranged in chronological order, and are sufficiently though not copiously annotated. A fine portrait of Pope forms the frontispiece, and a view of his villa at Twickenham the vignette on the title-page.

Some of Ruskin's letters, recently printed for the first time, written in the later years of his life, are in a characteristic vein, but pathetic in their foreshadowing of the end. Here is one:

I'm not overworking, and never will any more, but the doctors are all quite unable to make me out. My work is to me Air and Water, and they might just as well tell a sick fish to lie on its back, or a sick swallow to catch no flies, as me not to catch what's in the air of passing fancy.

And here is another, concerning which the recipient writes that the "talks and plays" anticipated in the closing sentence never came:

It is a shame never to have thanked you for your lovely letter—but my life is *all* a shame to me now, in its weakness and failure. But I have health enough yet, thank God, to do tranquil work, and my friends will, I hope, still be a little pleased about me in seeing it done. Don't plague yourself about personally helping me at Sheffield or in other things, but use your own proper influence to make people do what is wise and right—each in their place—and explain what you care for of my work and me to them—and, above all, think of the things I try to teach—non-usury for instance, and agricultural life—in themselves, and not in any connection with me. I hope we may have many talks and plays yet.

The second volume of the important and exhaustive reprint of narratives and documents relating to "The Philippine Islands 1493-1803," edited by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, and published by the Arthur H. Clark Company of Cleveland, is devoted to the years 1521 to 1569. It describes the voyages, discoveries and hardships of Garcia de Loaisa, Alvaro de Saavedra, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, partly in resumes of contemporaneous documents, partly in translations of the documents themselves. These reprints from original sources bring the reader closer to the real aims and hopes of these sturdy adventurers and makers of empire than any narrative of modern writing could do. In these pages, written by actual participants in and eye-witnesses of these early struggles between barbarism and a militant and not over-enlightened Christianity, we see history in the making and get glimpses of the beginnings of problems, the later complexities of which have been left for our own unravelling. The illustrations include portraits of Legazpi and Urdaneta, facsimiles of old signatures and a picture of the Santo Nino of Cebu.

THE SICK CHILD.

He for whom the world was made
Cannot lift his heavy head,
All its pretty curls puffed out,
Burnt with fevers, parched with
drought.

He, the tyrant, whimsical,
With the round world for his ball,
In a dreadful patience lies,
Old since yesterday and wise.

Like a martyr on the rack
Smiles, his soft lips burnt to black,
While the fever still devours
His small body, sweet as flowers.

Dreadful patience like a sword
Stabs his mother's heart, dear Lord;
Make him naughty, wild, and gay,
As he was but yesterday.

Little services he pays
With his kisses and his praise,
While his eyes ask pardon still
That he's troublesome and ill.

He lies smiling with a fire
In his cheeks blown high and higher,
By the wind of fever fanned.
Lord, his kisses on my hand!

Give me back my boy, I pray,
Turbulent, of yesterday.
Not this angel, like a sword
In his mother's heart, dear Lord!
Katharine Tynan.

The Spectator.

SIMPLES.

When I am weary with the toils that
bring
Small pleasure in the doing—sick for
rest,
Failing for want of love and perish'd
zest,
Heavy with song, yet all too tired to
sing;
I murmur o'er delicious words that
smell
Of sun and meadow, for a soothing
spell.

Vervain and hyssop, savin, costmarie,
Wild-thyme and anise—how their es-
sence steals
About the brain!—a pungent scent
that heals

Like the sharp odors of the bitter sea,
Which sting the lips they kiss, yet in
the smart
Only refresh and medicine the heart.

Words, words! But as I gently mur-
mur them
I see the marish-buds once more, and
turn
My cold cheek to the sun, that it may
burn
With that pure heat aglow in root and
stem;
Drinking the heavenly breath of
summer in
From yellow bunches of the flaming
whin.

Ah! leave me to my simples, for as
oft
As thought oppresses me, my lips are
fain
To tell their titles o'er—anise, ver-
vain,
Juniper, pimpinella!—till, so soft
The hot air grows that slumber falls
on me,
With scent of mint, and thyme, and
rosemary.
Pall Mall Gazette.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

To you this word is, you whose lives
are lit
By nothing fair, to whom each day-
break brings
One loveless labor of the hand where
clings
To soul and body smoke and grime and
grit,
Also to them this word if any sit
Easeful, serene, fulfilled with all good
things,
And say of far-off alien travailings,
"Where are they?" and of hunger,
"What is it?"
Behold how in an ancient heart rose
up
This vision of the wise kind god who
viewed
Naked and poor in bondage of blind
pain
Man's tremulous brood, nor longer
would retain
His blissful seat, but drank a bitter
cup,
Having compassion on the multitude.
Edwin Robert Bevan.